# JIM CROW TALES

By

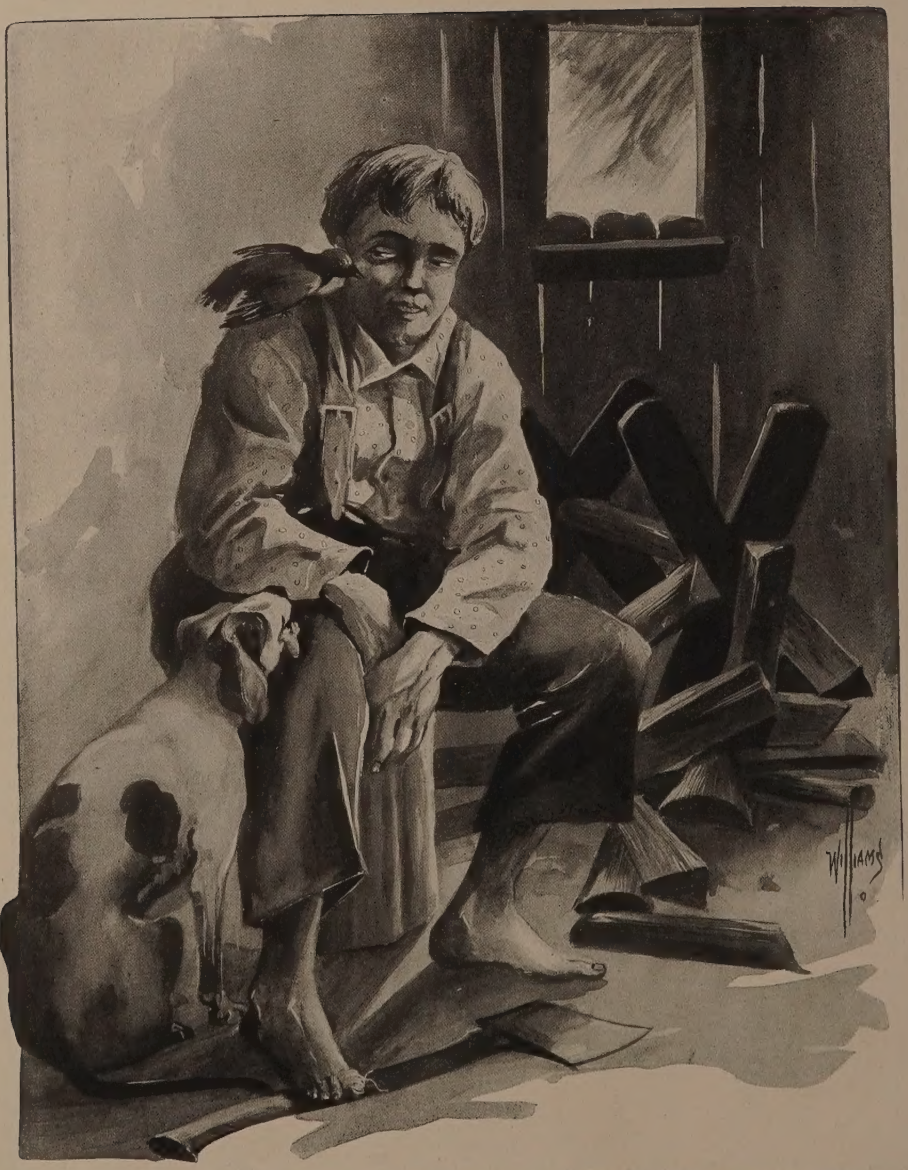
BURTON STONER

ILLUSTRATED BY

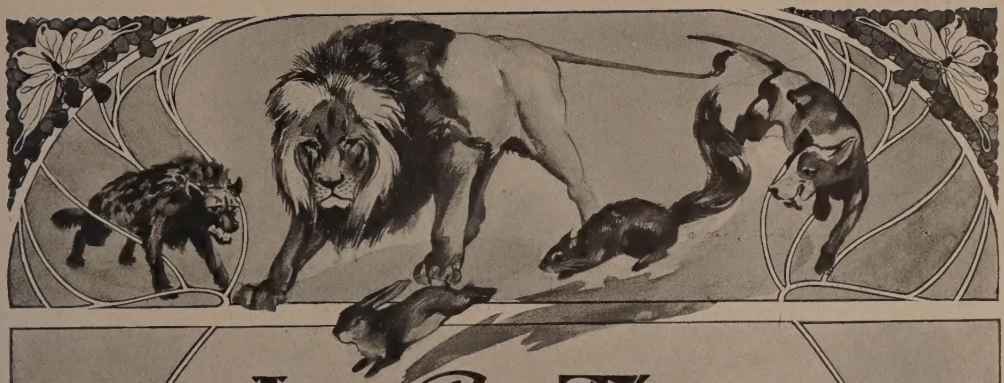
CARLL B. WILLIAMS

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING CO.

NEW YORK AKRON OHIO CHICAGO




"Jim Crow would sit on his shoulder and tell him of the doings of the forest animals."
(Page 16)



# JIM CROW TALES

By

BURTON STONER.

THE
SAALFIELD PUBLISHING CO.
AKRON OHIO
CHICAGO
NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1905,
BY
THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING CO.

MADE BY
THE WERNER COMPANY
AKRON, OHIO

# Contents.


PAGE

Capture of Jim Crow . . . . . 7

Terrible Claws the Snow Owl . . . . . 17

Slim Nose the Raccoon . . . . . 29

Long Ears and King Cotton Quarrel . . . . . 40

Red Head the Woodpecker . . . . . 49

A Dispute Between Potter and Fine Fur . . . . . 57

Narrow Escape of Piny and Proud Tail . . . . . 68

Strong Legs' Escape From Sly Nose's Trap . . . . . 79

Chipper the Woodchuck . . . . . 89

Shrewd Eye's Attempt to Fool the Bear . . . . . 100

Death of Long Nose .. . . . . 108

Woodchuck's Victory . . . . . 116

Trial of Mr. Hyena . . . . . 122

Mrs. Molly Sniffer and Her Two Cubs . . . . . 129

Stripes Attempts to Play 'Possum . . . . . 140

# *Illustrations by Carll B. Williams.*


PAGE

Jim Crow would sit on his shoulder and tell him of the doings of the forest animals *Frontispiece*

The gun "banged" and a wily crow answered, "Caw-caw-caw" . . . . . 8

The crow scratching his bill on the crown of the straw hat . . . . . 10

Terrible Claws spread his wings and flew off through the forest . . . . . 19

The moosebird began to shriek, "The enemy! The enemy!" . . . . . 20

Coming to Minnow Brook, he stopped long enough to feel under several flat stones for crabs . . . . . 32

Climbing to the top, he sniffed the air, then rubbed his nose . . . . . 34

The terrible baying of Cæsar woke the silence of the night . . . . . 35

"My name is Long Ears," replied the big young cottontail . . . . . 44

Soon Cæsar came running up, with nose close to the ground . . . . . 46

"This place will not make a bad den for myself" . . . . . 50

Old Mr. Potter the beaver, was almost beside himself, he was so busy . . . . . 56

He noticed a sign on a huckleberry bush . . . . . 60

Proud Tail was the first to disappear in the hole, and Piny came after . . . . . 75

The opening to his den was darkened by a head with a dreadful beak . . . . . 76

Strong Legs, a large plump cottontail . . . . . 80

"Ho, ho, good evening, gentlemen," said Mr. Sly Nose . . . . . 84

Messrs. Cottontail legging it off through the snow . . . . . 87

Chipper took his station on the watch tower . . . . . 88

He saw Sly Nose the fox, squatting above the den . . . . . 97

"Well, well, I do believe that here comes Old Grumbler," remarked Shrewd Eye . . 100

They both disappeared in the forest . . . . . 106

"O, Horrors! Can it be true that there sits Long Nose, the alligator?" screamed Mrs. Cottontail . . . . . 110

The alligator plunged down the hole . . . . . 114

King Lion called the meeting to order . . . . . 118

"Enough!" roared King Lion as Mr. Cricket piped "Twenty" . . . . . 120

Struck Mr. Hyena a blow that sent him rolling over many times . . . . . 125

Mrs. Cow gave Mr. Hyena a severe lecturing . . . . . 126

The animals started for their homes . . . . . 127

Boxer scratched and labored until he had almost reached his piece of sweetness . . 131

Boxer began tugging at the limb . . . . . 134

Mrs. Whiskers entered with her family of five children . . . . . 144

"When I tap him on the ear with this elder-stem, see him jump" . . . . . 148

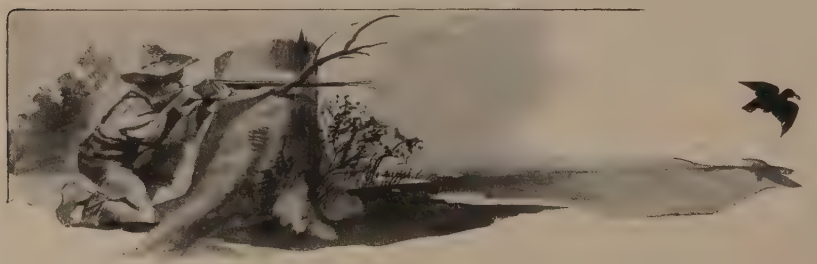
# apture of Jim Crow.

TOM, the Farmer's son, crept around among the bushes so stealthily that you would have thought him an African explorer stalking a band of elephants. Cæsar, the dog, was at his heels, treading so closely that he bumped his nose on the boy's bare legs which caused him to sneeze. Tom turned to the faithful old fellow, motioning with a stick what he would do the next time he made the least noise.

When Tom reached the cover of a certain stump toward which he had been working his way, he squinted around the rough bark and took aim at a black spot down in the cornfield. The gun "banged" and a wily crow answered "caw-caw-caw" as he flew up from behind a tuft of grass not far from where the bullet had struck. Tom had seen the bird alight, but he had been fooled by a charred limb at which he shot. Cæsar raced down across the field, as if he too had

sworn vengeance on the bird that his master wanted to kill for pulling the sprouting corn from the ground. "Come he-ar! Don't be foolish now, old dog," scolded Tom, "you and I had better go and hunt for snails and tadpoles. Maybe we could catch *them.*"

Cæsar put his tail between his legs and sneaked around in the tall grass to the rear of Tom. He realized that there was disgrace somewhere, and that he had to do something mighty to redeem his



The gun "banged" and a wily crow answered "caw-caw-caw."

prowess. He snapped at the small flies that buzzed around his nose, so fiercely that his teeth came together like those of a mad bear. Just at that moment, he could have whipped a woodchuck in less time than it takes a cricket to give his fiddle three scrapes.

Tom was suspicious of every large bird that alighted on the ground, which he had cleared of stumps and sown with corn. The first crop was to be his, as promised by his father, for the trouble of

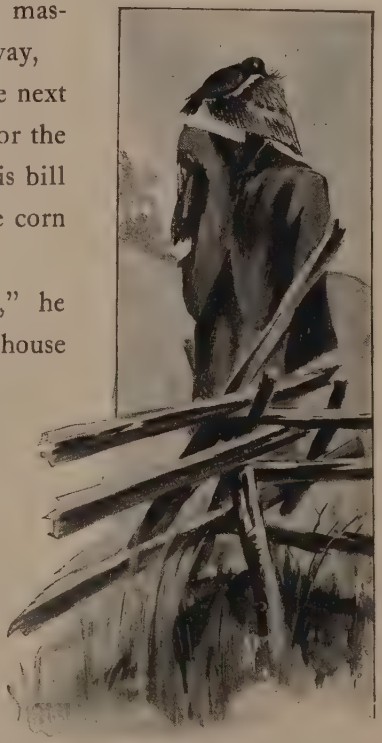
clearing the field. "Crows steal young chickens; crows rob the nests of smaller birds and carry off the eggs and fledgings; crows pull up newly sprouting corn, and sometimes scratch away the hills and eat the grains before they have begun to grow; crows ought to be killed because they live off the crops which the farmer raises, besides robbing nests which wandering hens make out along the fences and in the berry patches." These are some of the bad things, which Tom and most other farmer boys accuse crows of doing, and they shoot them whenever they get the opportunity.

Tom went back to the woodshed, rubbed his rifle well with a greased rag, and loaded it again. Then he visited the barn, where, after considerable rummaging, he found an old tattered coat, and a gunny sack which was cut apart and made to appear as much as possible like a pair of trousers. Taking these and an old straw hat down into the corn field, he dressed a young gum stump as a scarecrow. It was enough like a man to cause the hairs on Cæsar's back to rise stiff and straight, when he saw it, as he came out from under the buggy shed where he had gone to get away from the pestering flies, and to cool his woolly sides on the damp ground. The old dog growled and sniffed angrily, but when he saw Tom laughing at him he turned his shamed face away in the direction of the hill where the woodchucks lived, to make it appear as though he was unconcerned

about the matter. He did not know exactly what was wrong but he felt that he had been fooled somehow. When Tom went into the barn again, he slipped down along the fence and examined with considerable sniffing the "old man" his master had fixed up to scare the crow away,

The first thing Tom noticed the next morning, when he started the cows for the meadow, was the crow scratching his bill on the crown of the straw hat in the corn field.

"I won't miss him this time," he grumbled, as he hurried back to the house for his rifle. To make sure that he would not frighten the bird, he crept along at the side of Brindle, his pet cow, as she followed the herd down the lane. But in the brief time which it had taken him to get his rifle, the bird had disappeared. Tom sat down in disgust under the old wild-cherry tree, to watch a red squirrel wash his face



The crow scratching his bill on the crown of the straw hat.

and trim his tail, for the day that had just begun. Soon a "caw" greeted him from the top of the tree under which he was sitting. A jerking black tail betrayed the bird's presence on the opposite side of a limb. Tom walked around the trunk and the crow hopped in front of another limb. Once he could make out the bill of the crow, which was working with satisfaction as if his craw were well filled with stolen corn. Tom raised his rifle and the crow hopped out of sight among the dense leaves of the tree.

Pretty soon the crow flew down and lit on the rail fence. Tom's breathing almost stopped at the sight. Up went his gun alongside the tree, against which he steadied it, but before he could take aim the crow hopped down into the pasture among the feeding cattle, and Tom knew that he did not dare risk shooting among the herd.

"I'll get him yet," said Tom to Cæsar, as the two wandered homeward up the lane. The old dog wagged his tail shyly, as if to say "maybe!"

Tom laid a trap for the crow in the far corner of the cornfield. When he came back from the thicket where he had gone to get some bean poles, the bird was dining on something in the opposite corner near the barn. Tom changed his tactics and set the trap near the barn. Then he saw the crow over at the woods. When the boy had his rifle with him the wily bird was far away, but when he went

empty-handed he could walk right under the tree on which he was sitting.

"Animals always come home to sleep," was a rule the farmer said never failed. His son tried it, and hid under some bushes near the big oak that supported the crow's nest. He waited and waited until his legs became cramped three times over; while the crow, sitting on a tree at the other side of the clearing, waited equally as long. Maybe he roosted over there that night, because Tom went home long after dark, and the bird had not yet returned.

Tom whittled what was something like a crow, out of a crooked root, and blackened it up with some charcoal. This he stood on a stump, on which he also placed some corn, one grain having a string tied to it. The other end of the string he held in his hand, off in a little covert of dead grass where he had hid himself before daylight to make sure that the crow should not know that he was there. The crow came to the cornfield as usual, sat upon the elm stump, and squinted at the wooden crow, while he ate up every grain of corn except the one with the string tied to it. This made Tom so angry that he could not rest in his hiding place. He had forgotten to bring his gun along, and evidently the crow knew this, because he did not seem to be frightened in the least when the boy jumped up in plain sight. Tom was so put out, that he picked up a stone and hurled it at the

big, black bird just as it spread its wings to fly. Ah! the stone had been aimed better than he thought and took the crow squarely on his outspread wing. A bunch of feathers was scattered in the wind and the crow fell flopping on the ground, where Tom soon captured him and tucked him under his arm in spite of the sharp pecking the bird was giving him.

Once he had him a captive, Tom did not hate the crow half as much as when the bird was free, and stealing the corn. He petted its glossy sides, gave him more than twice the amount of good things he wanted to eat, and even got up one night to see if the crow was resting nicely on the old coat that he had thrown in the woodshed where he had him a captive.

Cæsar was always a good companion, but he did not respond so heartily as did the crow "caw," when addressed by the farmer's son. Tom had heard of crows that could talk like parrots, and after feeding the bird well he would put him on his perch before him, repeating words persistently, while the crow would answer with loud "caws," much to the annoyance of the old dog, who would betake himself to the clearing, and remain there until all the lessons had been given.

When Tom went for trips out into the forest, the crow went with him, perched on his shoulder. By and by, Tom and the crow came to understand each other thoroughly.

"Jim Crow," the name given the bird by Tom, did not need to be taught how to count, because he could always tell how many woodchucks there were over on the hill; only now he learned to say it in Ned's language. He knew when it was going to rain by sounds the frogs were making, and the height at which the swallows went for the flies. He knew when the berries were ripe by the number of paths the bears wore through the patches; how the cottontails were enjoying the summer, by the richness of the clover; and he knew where the chipmunks hid their stores of nuts, by the manner in which they barked and jerked their tails. He knew what was the matter with a field mouse when it squealed, whether it had been stung by a bee that had taken possession of its nest, while it was down along the swamp looking for something to nibble, or whether it was quarreling with a companion over a choice piece of wild cotton for its nest. When a woodpecker tapped on a dead tree, Jim Crow could tell by its manner, how far he was from the worm he was after. When the wolves howled in the forest, and Cæsar whined, and crept close to Tom's legs, the crow tried to give the dog to understand that one day just such a wolf had chased a deer to its death.

Jim Crow knew how Stripes the chipmunk, had failed in his attempt to play 'possum, when he was down in the den of Gray Hairs, and Slim Nose the raccoon, came along and tickled him in the ears and thumped him over the head with a stick.

## *Capture of Jim Crow.*

Tom sometimes talked to Jim Crow, as though he thought the bird's hearing was bad, when indeed he could both hear and see better than the farmer's son. Even though he was sitting far up on his lookout limb, on the big oak where was located Crow's Nest, he could hear Polly, the kangaroo mouse, squealing with pain and anger because she had been nipped on the end of the nose by a beetle. Then he could see her on her way down the trail leading from Cattail Swamp to Woodchuck Town on the hill, in search of a plaster of fresh plantain to put on the sore spot.

Jim Crow knew where the den of Slim Nose the raccoon, was, and he saw him escape, the time the Trapper's son thought he had him a captive in the clearing. If it had not been for Red Head the woodpecker, that time Ned would have gotten the raccoon's skin.

The story about Long Nose the alligator, and how he came to his death, Jim Crow got from a wild duck one spring, when that bird was on his way from the southland to the lakes in the north. This all must be true, for the crow never suspected a duck of telling a falsehood. It made him feel good that an alligator had been outwitted by a cottontail.

When Piny the red squirrel, had his fur trimmed up spick and span, and the tree frogs were silent all the day, Jim Crow said there was going to be dry weather. No one knew this any better than he,

for the secret habits of all animals were known to him. Every bird, on its way north after a long winter, stopped in the clearing for seeds and worms, and from these messengers Jim Crow got many of the tales that are told in this book.

On rainy days, while Tom would be lounging in the woodshed, the crow would sit on his shoulder and tell him of the doings of the forest animals, and they are given here as nearly as possible as Jim Crow told them.

# errible Claws the Snow Owl.

TERRIBLE CLAWS, a fluffy, white-coated owl, ruffled his feathers, shook himself, and then wiped his bill on both sides with uplifted foot, to clean off the traces of the cottontail he had dined on the night before. Something had awakened him from his sleep, and he opened his eyes wide to see who and where the intruder was. Ha, right there in front of the hole in the cedar, where the owl had been snoozing, sat Piny, a noisy squirrel, chattering and barking to a friend squirrel, perched on a neighboring tree, about the number of nuts he had collected for winter.

"I guess I'll put a stop to that noise," croaked angry Terrible Claws to himself. His movements were noiseless as the falling snow, and slowly, with great eyes of fire, he moved toward the hole. Mr. Piny jerked his bushy tail, this way and that way, as he counted off to his friend the things he had laid away in his storehouse; "One

hundred sound hickory nuts; two knots full of beech kernels, dry as powder and well seasoned by frosts; five layers of assorted goodies—"

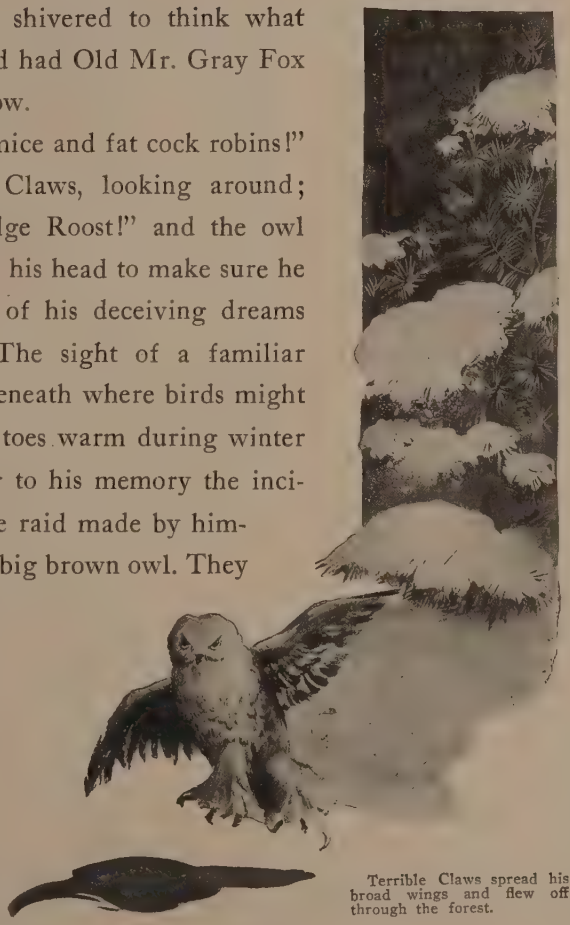
"Look out for Old Man Hoot!" fairly screeched Piny's companion, who had seen the owl's head appearing in the knot hole.

Flap! Mr. Piny danced wildly, almost losing his balance on the slippery limb. Two great wings went brushing by, and swept down to the snow beneath.

Mr. Piny made a spring for the trunk of the tree, and ran almost to the tip top before stopping, making five barks to every leap. Hiding in a thick bunch of cedar needles, he looked down and, behold, there stood his dreaded enemy, Terrible Claws, up to his long feathers in the snow, blinking his eyes at a stream of sunshine that came down through the branches of the trees. The sight of the owl was blinded by the light, and he hardly knew which way to turn to get back to his den. The forest was noisy with the danger signals of the squirrels, who were scampering in every direction to get away from their enemy. Their chattering increased when Terrible Claws spread his broad wings, and flew off through the forest, striking against limbs, pulling out his tail feathers on bushes, and at last landing upon a branch in a dense growth of young pines, where the shadows made it possible for him to see pretty plainly. As he drew

himself together, he shivered to think what would have happened had Old Mr. Gray Fox caught him in the snow.

"White bellied mice and fat cock robins!" exclaimed Terrible Claws, looking around; "if this isn't Partridge Roost!" and the owl scratched the back of his head to make sure he was not having one of his deceiving dreams about rich feasts. The sight of a familiar covert, a leafy bed beneath where birds might keep their shivering toes warm during winter nights, brought clear to his memory the incidents of a memorable raid made by himself and Horn Ear, a big brown owl. They had captured two fat partridges that time, but since then had never been able to locate the scene of their catch, and their eating had been confined to cotton-



Terrible Claws spread his broad wings and flew off through the forest.

tails, mice, and very rarely a pine squirrel or spruce hen, who paid their lives for being out later at night than they should have been.

Terrible Claws had a strong appetite, and he often dreamed of partridges as he dozed away the daytime in the hollow cedar. "Here then," thought he, "is just the place to get them." No matter in what direction he turned, he smelled partridge from the limb on which he stood. Doing the hunting in a wise and proper manner, as all owls should, there ought to be enough eating in Partridge Roost to last for a month or two. One every other night, with a few mice, would keep him in proper style.

But Terrible Claws was rudely awakened from his planning, by the peremptory question, in a croaking, harsh tone, "What are you doing in there?" Every bird and beast of the forest, including Terrible Claws, knew the voice of Beggar Tom, the moosebird, for he traveled widely, ate greedily whether he was invited or not, and made it his business to know what was going on in the forest, whether at Bear Wallow or Deer Run, Cattail Swamp or Blackberry Grove. Hence his boldness in demanding an explanation from the owl.

Terrible Claws opened his eyes, wide as on the darkest night, and stepped sidewise toward his saucy questioner. "What hunter's meat have you been stealing?" snapped the owl. Terrible Claws was well acquainted with the greedy habits of the moosebird family and

"The Moosebird began to shriek, 'The Enemy! The Enemy!'"

(Page 22)

knew that Beggar Tom was no better than the rest of the members. From the appearance of Tom's beak, he had just been dining freely on some fresh meat that was not of his own liking, for a moosebird never commits murder, but is generally a good sociable fellow, making friends with every hunter that puts in his appearance in the northern woods. Then he hangs around the hunter's cabin door, for scraps of whatever may be thrown out.

Now Beggar Tom never liked to have any mention made of the manner in which he got his living, and he showed fight at the remarks of Terrible Claws. But he forgot that the owl could see pretty well in the shadows of the pines, and, on making a dart for his enemy's back, the owl tore out several of the chattering moosebird's feathers with one of his sharp claws. Indeed, so close was Beggar Tom to being captured, that he gave a screech of alarm and anger, then darted for the top of one of the pine trees.

"It's never a smell of partridge that you shall have, you Old Hoot-in-the-Night," cried Beggar Tom, forgetting that it was only the family of Brown Coated owls that go about through the forest asking the question, "Who are you?"

"How do you know that I want partridge?" asked Terrible Claws, rolling his big eyes around like a search light on a ship at sea. "Can't I come into Partridge Roost whenever I please? What

if I do eat one, now and then? It is no worse than you, begging every day and then forgetting to clean off your beak, after you've eaten like a glutton."

Just then Terrible Claws became interested in a very strange, clucking noise, beneath some underbrush. He looked down and the plumpest cock partridge that he had ever seen was strutting along at the head of a large flock of birds of his own kind. The dusk of the approaching evening had driven them to their sheltered roosting place. Their leader, ever alert to the presence of danger, piloted them into the covert.

Beggar Tom also had his eyes wide open and saw the partridges as soon as did Terrible Claws. Just as the owl was preparing to make a descent after his prey, the moosebird began to shriek, "The enemy! The enemy! Look out for the enemy!" in a way that only a moosebird can take to signal the approach of danger to a friend. "Wh-r-r-r" went the cock partridge away through the forest, with his entire flock in pursuit, making a noise like that of thunder. The cock headed straight for Cattail Swamp, where he knew there were plenty of hiding places under grassy hummocks, although a heavy snowfall during the night might completely cover him and his flock, so they would never get out.

Beggar Tom was so well pleased with his good work in helping

the partridges to escape the owl, that he considered it very proper for himself to visit the hunter's camp again, and have a few extra bites before taking his roost for the night.

It was far different with Terrible Claws. He was so angry that he sunk his talons into the limb on which he stood, and flapped his wings as if they were broken, cracking the points of his beak together like a parrot. Strong Legs, the king of Blackberry Grove, who happened to be passing by just then in search of stray nuts, that some careless squirrel might have dropped, sniffed the air with his split nose in the direction of the owl, to discover the cause of all the trouble. Striking the ground three times with his woolly hind legs, he made a spurt for Mossy Dell as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Who? Who? Who are you?" came a familiar sound to the ears of Terrible Claws. "There comes Horn Ear," he remarked. "I'll just get him and show him around Partridge Roost. There'll be plenty to eat for both of us. One of us can take care of that pesky moosebird, while the other looks after the partridges."

Terrible Claws swept away through the forest like a great snowflake, his muffled wings noiselessly fanning the air. Together the two owls soon returned to Partridge Roost. Horn Ear was equally as big as Terrible Claws. There was a cracking and splintering of beaks, it being rather an excited conversation for owls.

"It's the same old place," said Horn Ear, recognizing by brush and tree the place where he and Terrible Claws had once caught a partridge apiece.

"There's no mistake about it," replied the big snowy owl, "one of those partridges would be equal to fifteen meadow mice, and bah! some of those mice make me sick. They don't taste like they used to, five years ago. Things have changed considerably since then in this section. There isn't a good hollow tree hereabouts, but what some raccoon has his tail wrapped up in it this very minute. Every direction I turn in my nest there's a crack in the bark, and the daylight shines right into my eyes. I haven't had a good sleep for a year."

"Oh, that's not the fault of the trees, Terrible Claws, it's because of those hammering woodpeckers. They've got to bore a hole into everything that sounds hollow, and the only way you can get rid of them is to eat all the bugs and ants crawling around in your nest. If the woodpeckers don't see any borings, they're not going to do any plugging."

"Horrors! You don't mean to say that you eat those dirty shell-backed bugs, do you?" exclaimed Terrible Claws. "It makes me shiver to hear you talk about it. Oo-o! The nasty things! And those pudgy bristling worms? I'm surprised how you can do it, Horn Ear."

"Oh, it's nothing when you consider that in the end they are bound to bring ruin to your home. Come with me and I'll show you the snuggest sleeping place you ever crept into. No sunshine, no bug borings, no woodpeckers—it's the most comfortable place I've ever found."

"But Partridge Roost?" questioned Terrible Claws, who disliked to leave the place now that he had again discovered it.

"Oh, we'll come back again. Do you see that maple with the moss on it, and that points toward Moose Bottoms? Well, that's our mark by which we'll know Partridge Roost again."

So the two left together, carefully noting the way to return to the roost. They swept away among the tall trees, over Deep Meadow and Beaver Dam, and at length came to a stately pine, whose life had almost been ended, and into whose heart at some time a pine squirrel had gnawed his way. The hole had then been further enlarged by raccoons and other animals, and birds that conceal themselves in hollow trees.

"Now you go right in here," said Horn Ear, squinting into a nice round hole," and then you go up inside, until you come to that hole made by a woodpecker. There never was a better place to spy on frolicking mice and foolish rabbits, when you don't want to be seen."

"Seems rather small, don't it?" questioned Terrible Claws, puffing out his feathers as if to compare his big self with the little hole.

"It gets bigger the farther up you go," assured Horn Ear. And so it did, as Terrible Claws learned after squeezing and spoiling his feathers, of which he was very proud.

"This is very cosy indeed," he admitted, after reaching the woodpecker's hole through which he cracked his bill in conversation with Horn Ear. But he had no more than straightened out his feathers and shaped himself to the hollow inside the tree, than Horn Ear scraped something to himself on his rough beak about Partridge Roost, and flew away leaving his companion to wonder what was the matter. Getting no answer from Horn Ear, Terrible Claws began to let himself down. His feathers caught on all sides; the more he scratched and twisted, the tighter he became wedged in the hole. He was struggling in vain. Too well he now remembered an old owl maxim, "Never crawl upward inside a hollow tree." But there he was now, a prisoner.

The break of day came, and Terrible Claws was yet in prison. He sat banging his head, having given up all hopes of escape. That Horn Ear was a scoundrel there was no doubt. That he intended to imprison Terrible Claws, and get all the benefits of the discovery of Partridge Roost, was very plain. The sun's rays came slanting from

the south, lighting up the depths of the forest. The trees soughed and swayed, each pine bough contributing its share of music played by the wind among its needles, and from afar the noise sounded like the approach of a storm. The gossiping pine squirrels chattered greetings to each other, and the occasional dog-like bark of a raven, as he sailed above the tree-tops, rudely broke into the weird music of the forest. The first snowfall of the season covered the ground beneath, but the grasp of Jack Frost had not yet reached into the earth, although the storm bursting so suddenly upon the land, had frightened all creatures which had not yet completed their preparations for winter.

In the creaking outer crust of the dead pine, slowly, because it was cold, a worm was boring, boring in toward the heart of the tree. The little particles of punk that it chipped off were pushed out into the cold, and one after another, sometimes two at once, dropped down into the snow. As its stiff body wriggled and turned in the labor, the pine swayed and shivered, its feeble strength being barely enough to hold it up any longer.

The worm had been at its slow work for three days, but it was doubtful if the cold would let it complete its task. The roaring of the forest was increasing with the power of the gusts. A little whirlwind that had started between the hills of Woodchuck Town, danced

and skipped as it rushed down across Moose Bottoms. By the time it reached the dead pine, its strength had grown to that of a small cyclone, and with a crash and a roar the pine's limbs were shattered, and worse still, its top was torn off at the point where the bug had been boring.

Great was the surprise of Terrible Claws when the tree broke and the light came flooding in on him. The worm had been boring right above his head and with the service of the whirlwind, the owl was freed from his prison. He blinked and blinked, not being able to make out what had happened, until a passing cloud shut off the stream of sunshine, and he saw that he was a captive no longer. With all his speed he swept from the shattered stub, away to his old home in the cedar.

It was late one evening, not long after his adventure with Horn Ear, that Terrible Claws in his search for food visited Partridge Roost, but found no birds there. After watching a while he flew to the ground and picked up a mouse. As he caught his prey he noticed a heap of feathers and bones. "It must be Horn Ear," he said. And sure enough, it was the remains of the scoundrel owl, after Old Gray Fox had dealt with him, for the tracks showed that the wily reynard had been there. No more have the inhabitants of Evergreen Forest heard Horn Ear asking, "Who? who? who are you?"

# Slim Nose the Racoon.

SLIM NOSE, the raccoon, got up from his bed and sneezed three times. Then turning around and around, he thrust his head from the den and caught sight of a woodpecker drilling for worms right above him. Every time Mr. Red Head's beak struck the dead limb, the dust fell down and tickled the coon's nose.

"Now, this is just like one of those rattle heads!—breaking into a fellow's nap right at the point where he is enjoying himself!" said Slim Nose, and he took a run up on the inside of the hollow tree, and made a grab at the worm eater's bill as it shot in and out the hole. Instead of catching Red Head as he had intended, he got a biting dab on his front foot that made him whimper and soothe the hurting point with his tongue.

Red Head, musing to himself as to what he had hit in the hole, drummed a couple of rat-tats and then squinted sidewise into the hollow limb. Slim Nose caught the bird's eye, and, not being seen himself, scratched gently against the tree's wall. Red Head, thinking it was a fat June bug scraping his armored back against the wood, made his head go so fast that his red crest was naught but a scarlet streak in the evening's sun. He was leaning half way in the hole, when a small lean hand, like that of a monkey's, slipped out of another hole and caught the woodpecker by both legs.

There was a desperate flapping for a few minutes, and then Slim Nose put his muzzle to the hole and said:

"I think, Red Head, I'll put a stop to your hammering. You've been bothering me ever since you came back this spring. It seems to me you'd know that if there were any crickets in here I'd eat them myself."

"I thought you liked only grasshoppers," squeaked Red Head.

"Oh, no, Red Head, grasshoppers are pretty hard to catch, and besides when you do get them you can't always wash them. I like everything wetted before I eat it. That fuzz, bugs have on their legs, tickles my throat when it's dry. But give me a crab to anything else, however, next to a crab I'll take frog hams. H'm!" and Slim Nose licked his mouth, "that's what I had last night down at Cat-

tail Swamp. I saw Strong Legs the cottontail, eating some strange kind of grass there, which he said would cure pain he had in one of his jumpers. But I'm getting tired, hanging up inside this tree and holding those timothy stems of yours."

"If you'll let me go, Slim Nose," pleaded Red Head, "maybe I can do you a good turn sometime. If you ever want to change your home I can give you the best of references as to where you can get another, and a safe one too. There isn't a tree in Alder Bottoms, or on Chestnut Ridge, or on Deer Run, that I can't tell you all about it, whether it's hollow or not, or whether it's got a good safe limb that isn't occupied by some other coon. Please let go my legs, for you've got them cramping me awfully."

"Supposing I did want to ask you something, where would I find you at night? You know I can't afford to be hunting up woodpeckers in the daytime."

"You'll always find me roosting in an old knot hole in the old maple, the third one on the other side of Bear Wallow, as you go on your way down to the creek. The limb is on the creek side, because I never sleep where the moon can shine in my face and point me out to Horn Ear, the owl."

Just then there was a faint howl in Moose Meadows. Slim Nose felt a chill pass over him, for he knew it was Cæsar, the hound. Letting go the woodpecker's legs, he slid down into the nest.

By this time the dusk of evening had settled over the woods and the squirrels were drawing in their proud tails out of owls' sight. It was time for coons to be looking for their meals.

Slim Nose, humped together like the little bear that he was,

Coming to Minnow Brook, he stopped long enough to feel under several flat stones for crabs.

thoughtfully gazed from the door of his den into the tops of a scraggly tree, where a little bird was cuddling himself beneath a leafy coverlet.

At length he ambled out upon his playground, a broad, smooth limb, for Slim Nose was but two years old and sometimes had foolish spells yet. Slapping with a front paw a fluttering leaf several times, he wheeled about, leaped upon a leaning maple, loped down to the ground, and hurried away on a well traveled path leading from Woodchuck Town to the open country beyond Moose Meadows.

Upon coming to Minnow Brook he stopped long enough to feel under several flat stones for crabs, but finding none, he climbed across the water on a wild grape vine and took up the path again. Soon Slim Nose came to a region of stumps and blackberry thickets. Here he began to take some precaution, walking now on a fallen tree, now retracing his steps a few rods, and then leaping from one stump to another; now following the footsteps of a woodchuck or a weasel, and now shuffling along a short distance on the ground. All this was done to confuse the nose of Cæsar, the hound, if the dog should happen upon his trail.

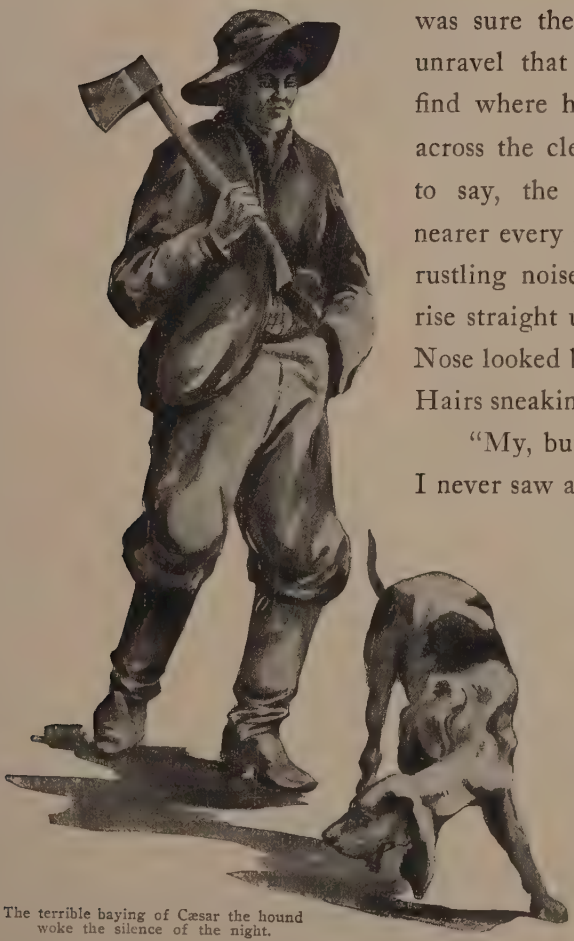
Slim Nose at length came to a fence of rails. Climbing to the top he sniffed the air, then rubbed his nose between his fore feet, and sniffed again, after knocking aside a spider web hanging from a fence post to an elm shoot. There could be no mistake—he smelled new corn, new corn with the sweet milk in it; it was a wonder there were not more coons after it.

Slim Nose let himself down backward off the fence, wishing to be as quiet as possible, and parting the tall grass with his pointed muzzle, ambled over among the rows of corn. By hanging his weight on a stalk he pulled it to the ground, and, in another moment, bit off the husk and began sucking the sweet juice. It was delicious! Slim Nose set himself down at the ear and ate with all his might, turning the cob around and around, as he nipped off the grains. Gray Hairs, the opossum, came by, being on his way to a chicken coop, and poked his nose intrudingly into the coon's feast, besides dragging his ugly snake-like tail, over the husk. For this Slim Nose slapped him on the head with a front paw, and sent him on his way.

Slim Nose had about cleaned off his first ear, when the terrible baying of Cæsar the hound, beyond the corn patch, broke the silence of the night. Hastily rolling a big pill of succotash between his fore-feet, and thrusting it into his mouth, he loped off toward the fence. Hearing the hound coming nearer, he selected a roundabout way to the woods; first retracing his steps by circling around through white-bellied mice paths and cottontail lanes, and coming upon his own trail again. Several times he repeated this movement, very much like the tying of a knot in a string. Finally redoubling his steps to the fence, he jumped upon a rail, ambled along it for several rods, and then jumped down and started for the wood on a cottontail trail. He

"Climbing to the top he sniffed the air, then rubbed his nose."

(Page 33)



The terrible baying of Cæsar the hound woke the silence of the night.

was sure the hound could never unravel that mess of tracks and find where he had really started across the clearing. But, strange to say, the hound was getting nearer every moment. Hearing a rustling noise that made the fur rise straight up on his back, Slim Nose looked behind and saw Gray Hairs sneaking along in his tracks.

"My, but you make me pant. I never saw anyone who wasted as many steps as you do," said Gray Hairs seeing himself detected.

"You don't mean to say that you followed me while I was making that curlicue?" demanded the coon fiercely.

"I didn't know what you were making, but I concluded that you must have eaten too much corn and were dizzy; so I followed you to tell you that it was no time to be playing catch-your-tail, for Cæsar, the brindle hound, is coming. He must have heard you in the corn."

"You must not think, Gray Hairs, to deceive me. I heard the chicken squawk and shortly after that heard the dog bark. Now you've been leading him right along my trail. You know that he will follow mine now instead of yours."

"Oh, come now, Slim Nose, don't get your back up so high. You were stealing corn while I was—"

"Ow-ow-w-oo-oo-o, ow-ow-w-oo-oo-o!"

This fearful sound broke on the ears of Slim Nose and Gray Hairs. During their quarrel the hound had almost slipped upon them, and had it not been for the tall grass of the clearing, he would have gotten them between his powerful jaws.

Gray Hairs slipped off through the grass and sneaked into a hole that a woodchuck had sunk beneath an oak stump. He was safe there. But Slim Nose, who was too proud to use anything but a house of wood, with the cleanest of beds, left the cottontail trail and hurried around through a thicket of brairs. Again the hound bayed. This time the dog was in the brush, which Slim Nose had just left. The coon must climb something now, or else be caught.

## *Slim Nose the Racoon.*

Running along on a fallen tree trunk Slim Nose climbed into a dead snag, whose body had been made naked of all bark many years before by fire. He was scrambling upward, when the baying hound reached the tree. The coon could see the dog's fiery eyes and then he saw a man thrust his head and a lantern into the hole. It was Ned, the Trapper's son. He was after Slim Nose's fine coat of fur.

Slim Nose climbed on and on, until the hole became so small his body would hardly slip through. He was now out in the tree's only limb, which extended toward a big green elm that the woodsmen had left standing because of its worthlessness.

By and by, Slim Nose, cramped in the narrow hole, believed that it was safe for him to slip back far enough, that he might stretch his cramped legs, for the hound had ceased his barking. Suddenly a fit of sneezing took hold of his nose. Then his nose began to smart and his eyes to shed tears. A cloud of smoke, slowly drifting up inside the tree, was doing all this. Slim Nose knew at once what it meant. Ned, the Trapper's son, was trying to smoke him out. He had heard how many a raccoon, dizzied by the fumes, had dropped down into the mouths of a pack of dogs. He now believed that his life was close to its end, for his woolly sides were panting hard for fresh air. Crawling out into the limb, as far as he could go, and where the smoke had not yet reached, he caught a few clear breaths.

Then too, his body helped to shut out some of the ascending odors.

But Slim Nose's head was becoming dizzy; he was afraid his nails would let go and he would fall down to Cæsar. Covering his nose with his front feet he determined he would die up inside the tree, rather than become the prey of the Trapper's son.

* * * * * * * * * *

The night had just gone, and the clearing was noisy with chattering and chippering birds all gay in the bright morning. Like the ship riding over billowy seas, Red Head, the woodpecker, came sailing over the treetops from the east. His crest was rosy, and his appetite sharp. Dropping down in a graceful sweep, of which Red Head was very proud, he lit upon the limb of a naked snag, and dancing around and around, with a casual peck, came to fresh borings of a bug. Hammering with all his might he drove his beak rapidly into the soft punk. Giving an unusually hard tap his beak broke through into the hollow of the limb. To Red Head's great surprise he caught sight of Slim Nose's short ears and spotted head. While he was looking at him and wondering why he was not at home in his den in the old oak, the coon, as if awakening from a deep sleep, feebly drew his head from between his paws and blinked his eyes at the woodpecker.

"Red Head, if that's you," said Slim Nose, "you've saved my

life. My, how that fresh air does tickle my nose. If you had been a coon I'd promise you ten of the finest pairs of frog-legs you had ever tasted for this good deed."

Slim Nose was interrupted by a chopping noise at the foot of the snag, which was shaking dangerously. "I must get out of here quick," said the coon, "that Trapper's boy, who's after my skin, is going to cut down this tree." Tearing away pieces of the old tree with his sharp teeth, Slim Nose soon had a hole big enough for his body to pass through.

"Come around this afternoon, after the sun has stopped shining into the door of my den, Red Head, and I'll tell you how I came to be in here," said Slim Nose as he crawled from the hole, keeping his sharp eyes on Cæsar and Ned at the bottom of the tree.

Sneaking across upon the green elm whose leaves sheltered from the eyes of the hunter, Slim Nose was soon out of danger, hurrying as fast as he could toward his den in the old oak.

# ong Ears and King Cotton Quarrel.

IT WAS a steaming hot day, and Long Ears a big young cottontail, felt as though his heavy coat of fur was smothering him.

"Phew, I wonder if it is this warm everywhere?" he said, and turning over on his side, panted like a dog, and stretched his hind legs out lazily. "There hasn't been a dew for three days, and my nose is almost parched. I can't smell a thing, not even the peppermint growing down there at Cattail Swamp. But I guess we're going to have some rain, because I hear a tree-frog."

Long Ears panted and panted under his summer shed in the swamp. Every way he turned his head, the hot sun's rays found him out. The dancing grasshoppers and droning crickets bothered him, while the little flies buzzed in his ears. He would lay both back over his head, then throw one forward at the scratching of a bird in

the bushes. Then both would fly up. There was really no comfort for Long Ears in the swamp that day.

"I think I'll take a hop over to Blackberry Grove," he at length decided. "The owls are asleep and I haven't seen a hawk this morning. I'll take it slow around by Frog Pond and Tadpole Pool, and up the hill past Woodchuck Town. There's shade all the way. Chipper, the woodchuck, may have in mind a hole that I can occupy next winter."

Long Ears hopped out from under the tuft of grass and stretched his hind legs. Ahead of him was a cottontail crossroad, bearing the signs: "EAST TO CATTAIL SWAMP; WEST TO MOOSE BOTTOMS, DEER RUN, TUSSOCK MEADOW AND BEAR WALLOW; this is a short cut to CROW'S NEST; turn to your left and you'll come out TWENTY-SEVEN JUMPS from BLACKBERRY GROVE."

These instructions were carved on a young elm, in cottontail shorthand, which neither Sly Nose, the fox, nor Terrible Tooth, the wolf, could interpret. Both of these enemies of cottontails were able to follow anyone of the paths a short distance, but cottontails have a very confusing habit of jumping to the right or left, a big leap, and when the fox or wolf come to those points they are always puzzled.

For the benefit of his friends, the cottontails, Long Ears had gnawed a few instructions how to reach his summer home.

"Turn to your right from Blackberry Grove road, take three big jumps to a bunch of timothy, then circle around until you come to an old blackbird's nest in some huckleberry bushes. Three strokes with your hind legs will give me great pleasure to come forth, if I'm at home. Yours,

Long Ears."

Long Ears hopped leisurely along on his way to Blackberry Grove. He was not a quarrelsome fellow, and was willing to learn new tricks even though his teacher might be the smallest cottontail in that country. Many a time, when other young fellows were reveling in some newly-discovered patch of tender clover, Long Ears was sitting in some secret place receiving instructions in cottontail craft from a wise old chap by the name of Tufty. In this way he became acquainted with all the tricks cottontails use, when pursued by an enemy. He had five rules that he always carefully followed.

Rule 1: "When Sly Nose is after you, cut two circles around Blackberry Grove. Then turn on your tracks a short distance, hop along the trunk of a fallen tree and sit among the upturned roots. A fox keeps his nose pretty close to the ground, and will not look for a cottontail up so high.

Rule 2: "Always live near a peppermint patch, because a whiff of peppermint in a dog's or fox's nose destroys his power to scent

correctly. If you run through the patch they will always lose the trail.

Rule 3: "Whenever you borrow a den from a woodchuck, be sure and ask him where he has his side door, because he always has one or two of them and when you want to get away from a weasel or a hunter you can use it and they will not know what has become of you.

Rule 4: "Never climb into a hollow tree. Coons and 'possums have good claws for climbing, but cottontails sometimes fall, and if the enemy is down below waiting for you, he will surely get you.

Rule 5: "Never try to be friendly to a man, and stay around his barn because it is warm under the logs or haystacks in winter time. Oh, no! Every man has hungry dogs and cats, that are always looking for something to eat. Then there are boys who study how to make traps that will catch you alive. Every man blames rabbits for killing peach trees and they never let cottontails get past Christmas time, if they can help it."

Long Ears followed these rules closely and no matter how hungry he became, nor who tried to persuade him, he remembered he was only a cottontail and that there were many creatures who like rabbit meat to eat.

Now down in Tussock Meadow there lived a proud cottontail

by the name of King Cotton. It was said of him, of course in secret, that he was descended from a crow-black rabbit that had been reared in captivity by Ned the Trapper's son, but who had escaped from him and made his home among the wild rabbits. The story must have been true, for King Cotton did have a black spot, right behind one of his ears, of which he was very much ashamed. King Cotton could cut his name higher up on a tree than any other cottontail in Tussock Meadow and he was very jealous of his reputation.

King Cotton having heard of the skill of Long Ears, which had reached Tussock Meadow that summer, desired very much to have a quarrel with him, and see if he really was as shrewd as they said he was. Several trips to Blackberry Grove failed to locate Long Ears, who seldom slept there because of the frequent prowlings of the trapper's dog Cæsar. He went there this day, only because he thought the dog would be too lazy to be out looking for creatures like himself.

Long Ears had hardly seated himself beneath some drooping berry bushes when he was awakened from his light snooze by a "thrum" upon the ground. He knew it was the challenge of someone and he jumped upon his all-fours, leaning forward ready to receive the enemy.

"Who are you?" demanded the challenger, King Cotton of course.

"'My name is Long Ears,' replied the big young cottontail."
(Page 45)

"I belong to Blackberry Grove," was the reply of Long Ears. "You are welcome to a part of this shade I'm enjoying."

"But who are you? I know this is Blackberry Grove. I am King Cotton, and I'm looking for a fellow by the name of Long Ears. Seems to me, young fellow, that you are pretty bold to be sleeping in such a poor place as this in the daytime."

"My name is Long Ears," replied the big young cottontail, "but surely I'm not a bit bolder than you, who must have come a long distance, for your legs bear the marks of dusty roads."

"So you're the chap I've heard so much about! I do not think you are half so strong as they say you are. Anyhow I don't like that bold manner in which you talk to me. I've come here to Blackberry Grove to teach you a thing or two, and think I shall take up my quarters in a nice, cozy den, down there by Beaver Dam."

"That is indeed a very fine place both for winter and summer," admitted Long Ears, "but as I have always claimed it for myself, I am sure that you can find one equally as good further down the stream."

This reply angered King Cotton, and as he was looking for a quarrel, the quiet manner in which Long Ears laid claim to the den by the dam, made the meadow ruler all the angrier. So with ears back, and an ugly look in his eyes, he made a rush for Long Ears.

There promised to be a terrible quarrel, had not something unforeseen happened. So many angry and loud words in Blackberry Grove was bound to bring trouble for both the cottontails. Just as they were about to begin striking at each other with their hind legs, their anger was changed to fear, and both stood trembling at the deep baying of Dog Cæsar. The hound was now at the very edge of the grove, and was giving out his warning that he smelled cottontails strongly. He had come upon the tracks of King Cotton where that foolish fellow had crossed the corn patch on his way to Blackberry Grove.

King Cotton did not hesitate long, but darted away through the grove as fast as his legs could carry him. Long Ears put into use one of old Tufty's favorite tricks. Hopping a little to one side, he took a great leap upon the roots of an upturned tree. There he crouched low to await the coming of the hound.

Soon Cæsar came running up with nose close to the ground, to the place where Long Ears had been sleeping. Round and round he went, each time smelling in a wider circle, but never looking up. Finally he stopped, gave several strong sniffs, and hurried away through the bushes on the trail of King Cotton.

It was a long and dreadful chase for King Cotton. At one time when he sat down to rest a few seconds beneath some bushes, the

"Soon Cæsar came running up with nose close to the ground."
(Page 46)

hound almost got him between his jaws by slipping up quietly. The warm breath of the hound almost frightened the life from the cottontail. It was too long a run for him to attempt an escape to Tussock Meadow where he knew of many secret places. Cæsar would catch him long before he could reach his favorite haunts. He was so frightened that he could not think of a single woodchuck hole in the vicinity of Blackberry Grove.

Panting and weak he came around in a circle the third time, to where he had challenged Long Ears. He knew he could not run much further, and the hound was in hot pursuit. What was that? A friendly thump? King Cotton looked up and saw Long Ears among the roots. The signal was an invitation for him to come up too. King Cotton was only too glad to accept.

Cæsar sniffed and sniffed as hard as he could, but he never thought once of looking up into the hiding place of the two cottontails. He followed their trails again and again, and finally went baying down through the corn patch on the road by which King Cotton had come up.

When he was sure the hound had gone, Long Ears jumped down from the roots. But King Cotton remained there until evening came, when he betook himself back to Tussock Meadow. However, before he went, he stood upon his hind legs, and upon a tender young beech

as high up as he could reach, he cut these few marks of gratefulness to the one who had saved his life:

"To all cottontails, both young and old, I want to make it known, that Long Ears, of Blackberry Grove, shall always have one true friend. King Cotton."

# ed Head the Woodpecker.

"RAT-TAT-T-TAT." Red Head the woodpecker was drilling into the fifth hole he had tapped without getting a single bug or worm. "They must have all gone to a picnic," said he squinting into the augur like hole. "Well, I just wish they would have given me an invitation. H'm, h'm; rat-tat-tat, rat-tat-tat, tatty-t-tat, tatty-t-tat. I'd have eaten up their picnic baskets, bugs, sandwiches and all, and they all would have tasted good. Rat-tat-tat tatty-t-tat. This is pretty hard drilling and I don't see how that worm could get into it. Must have had his pincers sharpened up lately, at the rate he shoved those borings out. Rat-tat-tat!"

Red Head had drilled until there was nothing but his short tail protruding from the hole. "Well, if that bug has fooled me, this place won't make a bad den for myself. Plenty of room inside.

Three closets for a few nuts, that I may need during the long snow; a bed long enough for me to stretch myself, and not muss my tail feathers. After all a real den that the owls cannot get into, beats a knot-hole every time."

He crept inside, for the tree was hollow; then he turned around. "Fine for sunshine, and I do love that so when the cold comes; away from chattering moosebirds, and yet right in the region where the fat bugs grow. Three for breakfast, one for lunch with a few wild-cherries for dessert, and two before I go to bed. Now just listen to that fat cricket scraping on his fiddle. I don't know just where he is and if I fly out of here to look, he'll stop that very minute. How they must fear a woodpecker. Well, I guess I am a dangerous looking being, with feathers of blood on my head, and a bill that is as sharp as an ax. Sometimes I'm sorry I kill them, but then I do love them so.

Red Head turned himself about and was squatting in the doorway of the home he had just found, when he saw a spider's web strung from an elderberry bush at the foot of the stub up almost to the point where he had drilled. "Hello," he exclaimed, "there is one of Mrs. Jenny Spider's telephone lines. I guess I'll call her up and see if she's had breakfast yet."

Red Head tapped the web with a big toe. "She must be in bed

"This place will not make a bad den for myself."

(Page 49)

yet or else I don't give the proper signal. Three rings for a fat fly, two for a slim one, five for a grasshopper and four that there is a cricket at her door. That seems about the manner in which she would have her signals. One long ring would mean that it was raining, and she might as well remain in bed all the day. It must be pretty hard work to be up all night climbing around over timothy stalks, spinning a web so that you can have something for breakfast the next morning. Then maybe the flies won't come around all that day, and you've got to sit down and dine on some left-over grub that's dry and hard. I guess I'll have to call up again. Maybe she's up now, cleaning away the dishes or else giving Tommy Spider some soup."

Red Head's toe tapped the wire again and again, but Old Mrs. Spider, who was sitting far back in the maze of webs which she had woven around and around in the shape of a funnel, saw who was meddling with her signal wire and kept herself carefully concealed, because woodpeckers have been known at various times to eat spiders. "Not at home," at length concluded Red Head and he closed his eyes in a snooze brought on by the warm sunshine of the summer's day.

While Red Head slept, two ants marched across his feet, each with a prisoner they had captured in an ant town further up the tree. A lightning bug flew over his head, flapping its wings to see if they were in fit condition for the night's serenade. A daddy-long-legs that

had climbed on his back, slipped off, because the woodpecker's feathers were too smooth for him to secure a footing.

The accident caused a confusion in Red Head's dreams and he twisted himself into a more comfortable position. The movement caused one of the ants to let go his hold on his captive, and there was some fast running for the little soldiers before they got him again. The lightning bug, sitting back in a dark corner, again turned on his lamp two or three times. A big bug, boring into the old tree's punk, dropped a chip down upon Old Jenny' Spider's telephone wire, and she came rushing out thinking she had caught a bluebottle fly. Somehow her foot got tangled on her front porch and she had to do a little spinning to repair the damage done.

Down in the deep grass and briars, a hungry weasel was nosing his way around, sniffing for birds' nests and roosts. "Are there any woodpeckers, flickers, sparrows or thrushes hereabouts?" he asked of a Mr. Woolly Bear, slowly climbing a wild cotton stem.

"Not as I know of," replied the caterpillar." I haven't got time to be looking for birds. If you're going toward the east, keep well to the right. There's an ant town not far from here, and they almost killed me when I came by this morning. If I get safely up this pole I shall be happy, because I'm never coming down again."

The weasel went on, sniffing and poking his nose into every sus-

picious corner where he thought there might be a bird's nest. Finally he reached the old snag, and carefully examining his way around it, he at length reached a small hole in its base.

"This is a woodpecker's tree, if I'm not mistaken," he argued, and then disappeared in the hole which had been made by chipmunks many years before. It was hard climbing for the weasel, being clogged in places with rotten wood, bug borings and the like, and in other places the walls were so smooth and steep, he could barely scale them. "If there is a woodpecker up there, he can surely hear me," complained the weasel. "I wish I had stayed out in the meadow. I'd rather dodge those snares set by Ned, the Trapper's son, than climb around inside this nasty hole. A dozen partridge-eggs would be all I'd ask for, and I think when I get out of here I'll look for some of them. There might be a chance of getting the old hen on her nest."

The weasel climbed on up, until he came in sight of a short tail of pretty bright feathers, in a woodpecker's hole. Then he became as quiet as a mouse. He did not dare make the least noise if he wished to capture the woodpecker, which was Red Head. Then too, there was another problem before him. Between him and his prize there was a wide space which he knew he could not leap because his legs were too short and his body too lengthy, to make a long spring. In the

dark he looked almost like a snake, and when he was mad he threw his body into a fold, that made him look still more like a snake.

While the weasel was planning, a big cricket kept sawing on his fiddle, "Chic, chic, chic, chaw-a-a-a; chic, chic, chic, chaw-a-a-a." The old fellow's wings were working finely, and never seemed to wear out as he rubbed them together time after time. Now that everything was very quiet, he sawed harder than ever. The weasel's tail brushed up against a pinch-bug, whose two sharp tongs went together with a snap. A tree-frog that had been silent until this time, no doubt smelling rain in the air, broke forth into a trill that made the weasel's head ring.

"I wonder who else is going to start up a song and a dance?" said the angry bird-nest robber. "The first thing I know that woodpecker will wake up and fly away. Then I'll surely have to go back to the meadow to get something to eat. This place is worse than a bees' hive for noise. Now there a locust has turned loose his rattle box just because he heard someone else piping. But how am I going to get that woodpecker?"

Just then an ant, who resented the intrusion of the weasel into his territory, ran up into the latter's fur and bit him in the leg so sharply that the weasel turned to scratch himself. By that time the ant had run down to his toes and gave him another pinch, before scampering off to his village.

The weasel was as careful as he could be, considering the things that were annoying him. A woodpecker-breakfast, was something that he could not afford to let get away from him. His nose was almost touching the bird's short tail and Red Head was still snoozing, amidst the scraping of the cricket and the tree-frog's quaver. The weasel was sure of his prey, and humping up his snake-like body as a big green worm does, was prepared for the final spring. Just then there was a hard sneeze and away went Red Head, leaving between the weasel's teeth one or two of his tail feathers.

"My, I surely must be catching cold," said a voice in a mysterious part of the hollow tree. "H'm, h'm, a cough in the summer time is a terrible thing. Seems to me I feel a draught blowing in over me and yet I stopped every crack that I could find the last time I slept in here. But who can tell who hasn't been boring into this old stub since then? Hello there! You sneak! It's you, is it, that has been nosing around again?"

Slim Nose, the raccoon, poked his head from one of the side rooms of the den. He hated weasels as bad as he did 'possums. The coon and weasel both got their backs up, and there threatened to be a terrible quarrel.

"I'll make you dance to that cricket's fiddle-music," snapped Slim Nose.

The weasel spat and spat, and backed off toward the hole through which he had come up. When the coon made an angry dash for him, he fell through, and went scraping and scratching down inside the hollow tree. Then wriggling along through the bushes, he left for the meadow, hoping to find a few partridge-eggs to satisfy his appetite. The racoon lay down to sleep again, after letting a little sunshine fall upon his nose, through the hole Red Head had hammered into the tree. That was to drive away the chances of his catching a cold. Then going back, he turned his face to the wall and wrapped his muzzle in his soft tail.

Away down at Cattail Swamp the "rat-tat-tat" of Red Head could be heard above the chorus of tree-frogs, which had taken up the trilling of the one on the dead tree, where Red Head had just escaped with his life. Their prophecy was true, for a rain storm was rapidly traveling above the horizon of Woodchuck Town on the hill. Red Head was industriously hammering to get all the bugs he could before the rain would reach him and he would be compelled to put up for the night.

"Old Mr. Potter the beaver, was almost beside himself, he was so busy."

(Page 57)

# Dispute Between Potter and Fine Fur.

OLD Mr. Potter the beaver, was almost beside himself, he was so busy looking after the building of a new dam on Deer Creek. Trees had to be cut and trimmed, grass and mud to be gathered to make the dam water-proof, and everything prepared for a nice warm den for the winter, now almost at hand. One minute he was showing Tommy Potter how to cut a tree, so that it would fall in the proper direction; the next he was giving instructions to Susie Potter, as to the proper manner in which she should use her tail in plastering a crack shut. His children were too full of fun yet, to realize how important it was that the dam should be well constructed, because they had always enjoyed the warmest of dens without thinking of how much trouble their parents had taken to make it so.

Mrs. Potter was equally as busy, biting and pulling at a very

large tree that leaned out over the stream, that she knew would make a good break to ward off the ice when the thaw and floods came in the spring time. Sometimes Old Man Potter would run up and do a little gnawing for her, just to show her that his teeth were as sharp as when he had first met her in Moose Bottoms. Then he would give her bits of advice on how many chips to gnaw off on the right side, and how many on the left, in order that she could make it fall just where she intended it should.

The younger beavers had much to learn, to become as wise as their parents, and in spite of all that Mr. Potter could do, they would now and then daub on some mud that was entirely too soft, and not rightly mixed, or they would begin to cut down trees that were too far from the dam, and too large to be dragged to it by such small animals as they.

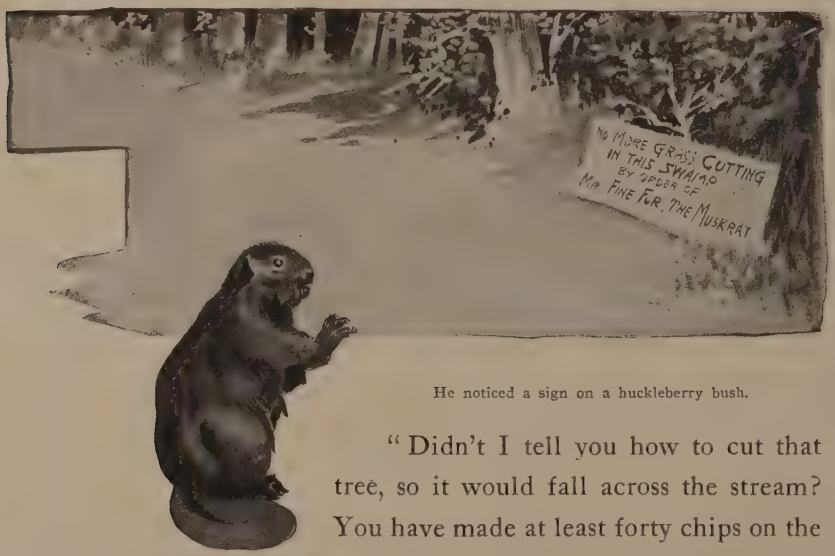
"Slap, slap," went Susie Potter's tail, as she threw the mud between the cracks of the logs and then washed her tail off in the water. She loved to paddle around in the water, but this was really work which she was obliged to do. "More grass there!" Mr. Potter would call out to her, when she became inclined to be careless, "a mouthful of that and a few small sticks—they will hold the mud. When it has dried a little, put on some more mud. Swing your tail harder." When a crab caught her by the tail, and she cried "ouch," she was scolded for wasting time.

## *Dispute Between Potter and Fine Fur.*

Tommy Potter also needed careful watching to see that he did his work of cutting trees rightly. He loved to hear them fall, and he sometimes forgot for what use they were to be put to after they were down. Mr. Potter seemed rather severe with the younger beavers for he gave them little time to sleep; and when they did lie down for a nap they never knew at what minute they might be awakened by the elder beaver pottering around, giving some extra touches to parts of the dam he had forgotten during working hours. King Nibbler the cottontail, who was occupying his summer shed in Cattail Swamp, this season, said he thought it was a shame that the younger beavers were made to work so hard, while Beggar Tom the moosebird, advised Mr. Potter that he should take a little rest. The old beaver replied, however, that there would be plenty of time to sleep during the winter, and his answer was a good one.

Mr. Potter was down inspecting a piece of work that had been done by one of the younger members of the family, and was giving it some extra slaps with his broad tail, when, "Crack!" down came a tree cut by Tommy Potter. It fell the wrong way, and the branches gave Mrs. Potter a terrible scraping. With a screech of alarm and pain she leaped on top of the dam, and ran down into a hole that had been left for a doorway. Mr. Potter looked up to see what was the matter, and when he saw where the tree had fallen, he was so angry

he cracked his teeth together, chattering like a monkey. Going over to the young mischief maker, who was still chewing at the stump as if he did not know when to stop, he began to scold Tommy:




He noticed a sign on a huckleberry bush.

"Didn't I tell you how to cut that tree, so it would fall across the stream? You have made at least forty chips on the right side when you should have been gnawing on the left. Cut off those branches," he continued, running along the fallen trunk of the tree and making an angry snap at each of the limbs. The young beaver set to at his duty at once, although he was tired gnawing and would rather have been playing in the pools and chasing the minnows out of their hiding places.

## *Dispute Between Potter and Fine Fur.*

The beaver family and the muskrats that frequented the banks of Deer Creek, were not on good terms, because they had different ideas about their individual rights and duties.

Mr. Fine Fur, the head of the muskrat tribe, believed that the more holes he bored in the banks of the creek the better it would be for himself and his companions. "Bore into every bank that has water underneath it," was his advice to all that asked it. Then, too, he claimed a certain authority over Cattail Swamp, in the very center of which he and his family had a mound-hut of grass and mud in which they lived during the winter.

He disputed Mr. Potter's right to enter that swamp and carry off all the dry grass he thought he might need. When he went over to the beaver dam, and told the chief dam-builder about the matter, he was treated very shabbily. Mr. Potter said that he did not care to be interrupted in his work, while he and his family were so busy. The big muskrat was usually not quarrelsome, but he did dislike to see nice tufts of grass cut down in his own private swamp, and carried away to the beaver dam. It made the swamp a more dangerous place for the muskrats to live in, with fewer bunches of grass to hide under, when a mink or fox was after them.

One very rainy evening, which all muskrats consider the finest kind of weather, Mr. Fine Fur took a run over to the beaver dam to

see how the builders were getting on—also to fish out a few crabs for himself. When he came to the dam he saw the old beavers and the young beavers rushing in and out among the logs in terrible haste. Mr. Fine Fur stopped and sniffed the air to determine if there was any danger near. Detecting nothing, he climbed among the branches of one of the newly cut logs, but he soon found it unsafe for him to remain there, for Mr. Potter rushed backward and forward, and there was danger of his being run over. The chief dam-builder's face was bespattered with mud, and his tail was plastered with a coat of the same. He was too busy now to take time to wash himself.

It made Mr. Fine Fur dizzy, to watch the dam-builder racing along the log so wildly, but being more curious than ever to inspect the beaver house and see how it was constructed, he moved along a little further and peeped down between the logs. There he saw Mrs. Potter and the little beavers up to their necks in water, daubing on mud just as fast as they could to keep out the water that was rushing through a break in the logs. "One of those young fellows must have done a poor job," mused the muskrat. "I can see very plainly that the grass and sticks were not put in properly. Old Potter did not do it, that is certain, because he knows better than that."

While the muskrat was observing the beavers at their work Mr. Potter rushed up and knocked him clear off the log on which he was

squatting. The dam-builder had returned in his accustomed haste, with some brush in his mouth which he intended to put in the break in the dam.

Mr. Fine Fur drew himself together in a jiffy, for he was filled with anger to the very tip of his smooth tail, now well covered with the mud the beavers had stirred up. Mr. Potter paid no attention to him, but just hurried on with the brush in his mouth. Then the muskrat crept between the logs, intending to show the dam-builder that he would not endure such indignities, and especially after the beaver had carried off whole bundles of the finest grass in his swamp which he now saw stuffed between the logs. Dropping down into the water he swam up and nipped Mrs. Potter in the leg with his sharp teeth. Immediately Mrs. Potter went after him with gleaming teeth. The younger Potters also showed fight. This was too much for the owner of Cattail Swamp, and he tried to get away as fast as he could by clambering up between the logs, but every cranny was stopped with grass and mud, save the opening which the beavers used as their door.

After a merry chase around, through the beavers' dam which contained many rooms, as the muskrat learned—for he got a nip in his hind legs in every one of them—Mr. Fine Fur reached the door and escaped into the swamp. The break in the dam was finally mended

with the aid of Mrs. Potter and the young beavers. That night the beavers slept sounder than they had since the dam was begun, for it was complete now, save a few finishing touches which could be put on at leisure. The young beavers were instructed to mix up a little more mud the next day, so as to make the dam thoroughly safe in flood time.

The next day, when Tommy Potter was nosing around in Cattail Swamp, he noticed a sign on a huckleberry bush. The words made him tremble with fear. There just as high as the muskrat could reach, he had cut with his sharp teeth this warning to all beavers:

NO MORE GRASS CUTTING
IN THIS SWAMP!

BY ORDER OF

MR. FINE FUR THE MUSKRAT.

The frightened young beaver on reading the warning, turned and ran home as fast as he could. Mr. Potter was just setting out to look for something to eat, when his son came along almost out of breath from running. "What is wrong now?" demanded the chief dam-builder. Tommy Potter soon told his story about the muskrat's sign, and his teeth chattered with fear as he did it.

"What!" screamed the elder beaver, "who gave that fellow the right to be so bold? I shall go at once and see him!" So off went the two beavers, along the trail of Cattail Swamp.

Old Man Potter was surely not himself that day, or he would not have acted so foolishly. After hunting almost throughout the entire swamp for its owner, Mr. Fine Fur was found digging another hole on the bank of the creek. When the elder beaver cracked his teeth angrily together the muskrat leaped out of the tunnel he was excavating.

"What do you mean by that sign 'no grass cutting' in this swamp?" asked the dam-builder, at the same time sitting up on his hind legs as if he meant business.

The muskrat looked puzzled. But after lifting one of his hind legs, and scratching his right ear, and then biting off a chunk of mud that clung to his foot, he said he needed all the grass in that swamp for himself and that Mr. Potter by cutting so much down, was simply helping foxes and wolves to catch animals that lived in the swamp.

"Why, Mr. Potter, soon I will not have a place to hide any more, and you know that there is no better grass to be found anywhere, for nest building. Just come with me and I will show you how this swamp is being spoiled for a hiding place."

Mr. Fine Fur led the beaver over to the edge of the swamp

wnere the younger beavers had been gathering grass and mud. They certainly had been very careless and wasteful of fine tufts, and when Mr. Potter saw it, he boxed Tommy Potter on the ear. "I shall see that no more of this kind of work is done," said the elder dam-builder. "But I do demand the right to get grass in the swamp, and I shall be careful where I get it, so that you shall have no complaint hereafter, Mr. Fine Fur." Mr. Potter, thinking of some addition he ought to make to his dam, hurried away with Tommy racing at his heels.

While the search was being made for the owner of the swamp, it so happened that all the beavers were absent from the dam at the same time, a thing Mr. Potter had always warned his family against. Mrs. Potter and Susie were taking an enjoyable run through the long marsh grass at the other side of Cattail Swamp. Now at this very time, bold because he heard no angry chattering to frighten him away, a big crab who was hunting a place to hide himself in, backed up to the dam and began boring a hole into the mud and grass. He wanted to make it as round as possible so it would just fit his body. The crab's head was disappearing from sight, when the water with a rush carried the crab inside the dam and sent him flying around in the beavers' nest. This fellow with the claws was the cause of another break which the dam-builders would have to repair. When the nest was filled with water, the crab backed out of the hole he had

made and slipped away under the bank of the creek. His old home was good enough for him now.

The crab got out of the dam, none too soon to escape the vengeance of the beavers, who soon returned and found their home flooded. All the dry grass they had dragged from the swamp was now soaked with water and they would have to carry new to take its place. Mr. Potter saw how foolish it was for him to be out quarreling with a muskrat, when he ought to have been home attending to his own affairs. He had broken one of the strictest rules of the beaver tribe, and now he had to pay the penalty by splashing out of his den as much of the water as he could, after having fixed the break that the crab had made. This took several days, and then the beavers washed their tails and faces and lay down for another snooze, being ready now for the coming of winter.

# arrow Escape of Piny and Proud Tail.

"LET me remember," said Piny the squirrel, "where did I put those last hickory nuts I got over there by Beaver Dam? There were twenty-five of them and not a dead one in the lot. Under that maple tree? No, that wasn't the place. Too many chipmunks there. Every root is full of them, and everyone can smell a nut that is two feet under the snow. It must have been nearer the tree, under which I found them. I know that I put one lot under some leaves, three good jumps to the right of that woodchuck Sneezer's den. But I want to leave them there. The chipmunks will not find them and they are right handy."

Piny jerked his tail, of which every hair was as finely dressed as an ostrich plume, as he counted over the articles he had stored for winter, to see if he had enough to last until springtime. But there was one lot that he had put away so secretly he could not recall their

hiding place. While frisking around on the limb below the hole to his den in a knotty maple tree, a feather floated down past him. "Hello," he barked, "I guess I'll add that to my nest. Looks like a jay-bird's breast feather, and if it is, then it's nice and soft. I need a few more such, to shut up that crack where the wind blows in on my head."

Piny turned, ran up the maple, and was crossing on a cedar bough, when he met Beggar Tom the moosebird, who was right in his path. Tom was trimming himself into shape for a long fly down the valley to tend to some matters of his own.

"Piny," said Tom, "If you were not so nervous, you would get along better. You are getting awfully careless! Last evening when I came by, you were sleeping in your den with your tail in plain sight. Now that will never do. It looked as though you had hung out a sign for Terrible Claws, the owl, to come and eat you whenever he had some spare time. That is as foolish of you as for Strong Legs, the cottontail, to go around cutting his name on trees, and doing it just as high as he can so that every person can see it."

"I wish you wouldn't bother me with your advice, Beggar Tom. You have made me lose sight of that feather now."

"Oh, that was what you were after, was it? I just pulled that out of myself because it insisted on standing out instead of growing

close to my leg. You see, Piny, cold weather will soon be here, and if I let one feather do that the others would soon be at it, and I'd freeze my legs. You are welcome to have it for your feather bed, but what I'm telling you will be of more good to you than feathers. So sit down, and do not be dancing around so much."

But Piny was too busy a fellow to remain in one place very long, and before Beggar Tom finished speaking he was spurting along over the branches of a nearby birch in pursuit of the chipmunk which had run away with the coveted feather. His tunnels in a log was all that saved the little squirrel from the vengeance of Piny's sharp teeth, as he popped into one that entered a hollow log. Piny had to give up the chase, because he knew very well he could not catch the little ground squirrel in his tunnel.

In a shaded clump of pine needles, away from the sight of small birds and squirrels that annoy, sat Terrible Claws the owl, who was awakened by the chattering of Piny. During warm weather he preferred the shelter of branches, to the stuffiness of a hollow tree, as a place to snooze away the day time. He snapped the points of his beak together hungrily and clutched tighter the limb on which he was roosting. He had seen Piny frisking about, and decided that there was a very good meal in that squirrel, if he could only catch him. There was the hole to his den in the maple, and as soon as the sun

went down below the trees he intended inspecting Piny's quarters.

On his return home, Piny met Proud Tail, another squirrel like himself; he was calculating, by counting the number of leaves yet remaining on the tree, about how soon the first snow would fall. Jack Frost had already nipped the stems of most of the foliage, and from Proud Tail's figurings, real winter was but a few weeks distant. "What do you say," he asked Piny, "are we going to have a hard winter?"

Piny felt the fur on his side, and replied, "I don't think so. I've had a great deal thicker coat than this, many an autumn. I reckon that we shall have a rather heavy fall of snow, but I do not think it will freeze the nuts in our den, like it did last winter. However, I'm laying in a good supply of feathers and wild cotton."

"I don't like to have my den stuffed with feathers all summer," said Proud Tail. "It makes me have bad dreams. Last night, after I had come home with several feathers that I found in an old robin's nest, I laid my head down on them for a few minutes and I dreamed I was in the claws of a hawk. When I woke up I found an ant biting me in the nose."

"That is a sign, Proud Tail, that there is danger near at hand. Those ants are not scurrying around because they want to, but because some enemy is after them. You should have gotten right up

and investigated. There must have been a weasel close by. It might have been a mink, for you know it is time for them to be coming downstream. The frosts are getting stronger every morning; I can feel it in my fur when I go out after chestnuts. Did you hear that hickory nut fall just now? It must have been a big one by the way the leaves rattled."

"I'm not looking for any more nuts," replied Proud Tail, "I've got all I can eat this winter already stored. I always count the long hairs in my tail, and just as many as there are of them, just that many nuts I collect. What is the use, Piny, of having more than you can eat, and then be compelled to roll them out of your den in the spring, when the worms get at them. If you have a large number of hairs in your tail in the fall, then there is going to be a long winter and you will have put away all you can eat."

"But, Proud Tail, you can never be sure just how many the worms will get at, before you may be ready in the spring to go out after something. Only last night I threw away a chestnut, that I was sure was good when I put it away. There! Didn't you hear another nut fall? Come on, we've got to get that before the chipmunks are after it. Those fellows have gotten enough already to do them, and why should we permit them to spoil some more by putting them away in their musty damp cellars?"

## *Narrow Escape of Piny and Proud Tail.*

Piny was inclined to be greedy, although he knew he had more nuts stowed away than he would be able to consume, but he did not like to see anyone else get them. Proud Tail was loath to go, because he would rather have hunted up some secret place where he might enjoy the warmth of the sun's rays and a quiet snooze. But there was no holding Piny, who danced nervously about, every time he heard the slightest noise. So together they hurried off in the direction of the big hickory nut tree.

Terrible Claws, the snowy owl, was all this time watching the movements of the squirrels. He was so anxious to get at them, he could hardly keep from cracking the points of his beak together and betraying his hiding place, when they skipped along beneath the spruce tree on which he was sitting. His sharp claws opened and shut on the limb with a terrible grip. They broke the bark, which dropped down and caused the noise that Piny had taken for the falling of nuts. The owl was really luring them on, and he hoped very soon to feel their furry coats between his claws. Had not Piny been too anxious and greedy, he would have been told by his sharp ears that it was not nuts he heard falling.

Piny and Proud Tail sat upon a stump, and barked away in conversation until they should hear again the rattling in the leaves. But

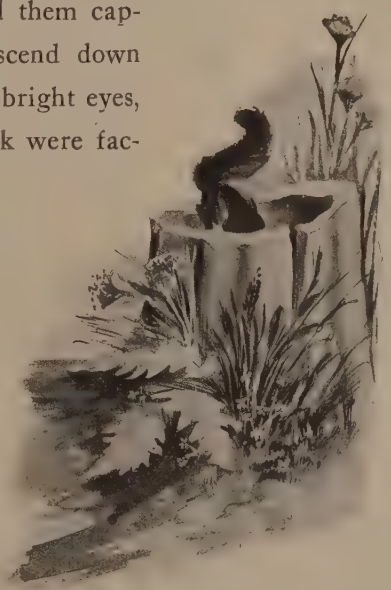
all was quiet now except the chattering of numerous chipmunks, perched on stumps and running in every corner. They were shrewd little fellows, with coats as shiny and fine as silk. No member of the forest's inhabitants were neater or cleaner than they, even though they did live in hollow logs and the roots of trees. Their beds were of the warmest grass and driest leaves, which were gathered during the heat of the summer.

"Here is one of their dens," said Piny, looking down into the center of the hollow stump. "I've seen that old chipmunk Stripes drag more than ten nuts in here during one day alone. I wish I knew where he has them stored. It certainly would be a rich find for our storehouses if we could get at them."

"I would never do such a thing," replied contented Proud Tail. "The only time I ever did go into a chipmunk's den, was that winter when my home was destroyed by a falling tree. But then I found enough covered over by leaves to keep me the rest of the winter."

Just then there was another rattling in the leaves, and Piny and his companion jumped around to see where it was. It was another piece of bark broken off the limb by the snowy owl, who with a swoop darted down after the squirrels. There was no place for them to escape, but into the hollow stump, down in the heart of which Stripes the chipmunk had his den. Proud Tail was the first to disappear in

the hole, and Piny came after. Their big bodies were tightly squeezed in the narrow tunnel, and they could barely wriggle along. The owl missed them, but he held them captives; for they were afraid to descend down into the heart of the stump. Two bright eyes, like little electric lamps in the dark were facing Proud Tail. "It must be a weasel," shivered he. The teeth of both the pine squirrels chattered with fear. But it was not a weasel, as the chippering voice of Stripes, the chipmunk, assured them. "Come right this way," said the little burrower, "my home is not so neat as it might be, and the best of my stores are put away for the winter, but I've got a few chestnuts here that I just found this morning. Come and help yourselves, Mr. Piny and Mr. Proud Tail."



Proud Tail was the first to disappear in the hole, and Piny came after.

Stripes guided the two red squirrels down along the root of the stump, which smelled more and more of earth as they went, and Piny

became suspicious. "We are not after nuts," said Piny, "please do not take us down any farther. How can we get out to the old maple tree? I'd rather be chased by an owl, than be lost down in this terrible place. Oh my, I wish I could get a breath of fresh air."

"I do not mind this so much," replied Proud Tail, "I lived in a stone heap one whole summer, and it was not half so nice as this. I could dig out of here in a few minutes."

Stripes led the way, going through a dark passage which had more terrors for Piny the farther he went. When a little pebble dropped from the roof of the tunnel he almost leaped on top of Proud Tail, and had he been outside he would have run and never stopped until he reached his den in the maple. Stripes brought them to a round nest, which he had hollowed out for his dining room in winter days.

"You must stop a few minutes and try my acorns," he said, rooting up some leaves, and drawing out one of the choicest nuts he had found that fall, he began taking off the shell.

"Oh, thank you," said Piny, "I am not hungry. If you will just show me the way out of here, I shall always be grateful to you, Stripes."

But Stripes and Proud Tail instead of being in a hurry, as was Piny, sat down to nibble an acorn kernel. Piny danced about, soil-

"The opening to his den was darkened by a head with a dreadful beak."
(Page 77)

ing his fine bushy tail and bumping his head against the roof of the den. He could not be made to accept the invitation of the ground squirrel to sit down and have a few bites, and he had quite forgotten he considered Stripes a robber, who took the choicest of the hickory nuts from under the old tree which he guarded so jealously. Stripes, instead of being the greedy fellow he was thought to be, by all pine squirrels, presented Piny and Proud Tail each with a large sweet chestnut, after he and Proud Tail finished nibbling their acorn, and then led them up through a narrow stairway which opened out into the air at the foot of a spruce tree. There bidding them "good bye," he returned to his den to store away the nuts he had gathered that morning.

Piny and Proud Tail both ran for their dens, unseen by the owl who was still sitting on the stump waiting for the prey that had escaped him through the kindness of Stripes, the ground squirrel. The red squirrels did not venture from their homes any more that day. Towards evening Piny got up from his nap, and began putting his nest in order, when the opening to his den was darkened by a head with a dreadful beak. Terrible Claws had flown up to see if the pine squirrel was at home, and saw Piny in the act of digging from the corner of his storehouse several fine nuts which he intended presenting to Stripes for the kindness shown him.

When he was sure the owl had gone, he slipped down the old maple tree and dropped the big nuts he had sorted out, inside the hollow stump where Stripes would find them. Upon each he had nibbled with his teeth a message to the ground squirrel, "Come and take all the hickory nuts you want." Never afterward did he interfere with Stripes, or become jealous of him when he saw the little fellow helping himself to the nuts under the trees.

# trong Legs' Escape from Sly Nose's Trap.

STRONG LEGS, a large, plump cottontail, was the governor of Blackberry Grove. As he hopped from his home, beneath a knoll, one fine winter's evening, he struck the frozen ground at the door three hard blows, such as any other cottontail of the Grove would have been proud to make. Strong Legs had won his title, and enforced his authority by the strength of his terrible jumpers. Many a proud young nibbler of clover, on becoming too saucy had been tumbled over by him.

Strong Legs twisted his funny nose around and around. It was not capable of telling him much, save in the selection of sprigs to suit his appetite and to keep that body of his round and sleek. But his ears—he needed them every minute. They could tell him whether it was a foolish, chattering squirrel tapping a fresh nut, or Horn Ear,

the owl, whetting the points of his beak; whether it was Beggar Tom, the moosebird, saucing a crow, or a thieving jay quarreling with some lonely songster on his way to new feeding grounds. But they had been especially well trained to report the presence of Sly Nose, the fox.

It was three days since Strong Legs had begun his nap. Something told him on the third day that there was going to be a thaw, and he had better be out looking for choice sprigs. The craving in his stomach had grown into an ache while he slept. A few nips of sassafras would do him a heap of good before he looked for a full meal. Where was he to get them?

Strong Legs hopped slowly down the little trail which led from his home. Then he came to three roads from which to choose. One went straight to Cattail Swamp, where he sometimes spent nice winter days beneath bunches of grass, roofed over with arches of snow.

Another road went straight to Woodchuck Town on the hillside; and a third, used mostly in summertime, went down to a rich land where grew in springtime sweet clover and many other tender and juicy grasses tempting to the appetites of all cottontails. Blackberry Grove had many streets, just like any city, only not so straight. Besides the public roads, there were many little by-paths and secret ways, whose puzzling windings Sly Nose could never unravel, al-

"Strong Legs, a large, plump cottontail."
(Page 79)

though he had sniffed his nose sore many a time in the attempt. These led around to hidden quarters in old logs, quiet resting places in brush heaps, and little nooks where the sun peeped in on lounging cottontails.

Now the road to Cattail Swamp, Strong Legs dared not take; for on it, freshly made, were the round prints of Sly Nose's feet. "He's down there nosing around. How foolish he is to think anyone would have been cramping his legs under a bunch of grass during these three days of snow storm." Thus mused Strong Legs.

The trail to Woodchuck Town led to only a barren hillside, in which were now sleeping all the inhabitants of the village. "A foolish set anyhow," thought Strong Legs, who did not have a great liking for those winter-sleepers.

So now there remained but one road for Strong Legs to follow. Hopping leisurely along, he started in the direction of the clover-patch, keeping a close watch all the while for a little sassafras, of which his stomach was sadly in need. He had not gone very far, until he came to the lane leading to Mr. Nibbler's quarters in a stone heap. Nibbler himself sat at the head of the lane, looking rather sad.

"Thump!" went Strong Legs' right jumper. "Thump!" went Mr. Nibbler's left hind leg. This was their evening "how do you do."

"How are things hereabouts?" asked Strong Legs, hopping up to Nibbler in a familiar way.

"None the best, none the best," replied Nibbler sourly. "Haven't had so much trouble since I left Timothy Bottom. Those squealing kangaroo-mice have been rushing in and out, boring holes in the snow, and letting the cold air into my home these past three days. I believe the cold has affected me," and Nibbler stretched back his hind legs, to see if there were any pains.

"If I were you, Nibbler," said Strong Legs, squinting out of the corner of his eye in a wise manner, "I'd move out of that stone heap. You are very welcome to occupy my old quarters under the cedar stump. Of course, the bed is only of grass, which one of those woodchucks brought from Cattail Swamp, but it's warm. I lived in there one whole winter. You no doubt remember when Sly Nose and his sneaking companions came and dug out many of our homes. That was—." Strong Legs was just about to begin the narrative of some exciting times when, "Hi, hi, you grass devourers!" screeched Beggar Tom the moosebird, who was sitting on the branch of a tree under which the Messrs. Cottontail were conversing. "Now what are you two fellows doing here? I'd advise you to make those hind legs of yours carry you out of here just as fast as they can."

Beggar Tom delivered this piece of advice while stretching his

head down through the foliage of the branch on which he was sitting.

Strong Legs and Nibbler moved off through the forest, while Beggar Tom continued scolding about evening prowlers. Tom was really one of the kindest birds of the forest. Whenever a hunter came into the woods, Tom would go and make friends with him immediately. By thus doing he received many a good meal, which was placed outside the hunter's cabin for the bird. Although it was said of Tom that he sometimes slipped an egg or two from another bird's nest, he had really declared himself the enemy of robbers.

"I guess I'd better see after those fellows," said the moosebird, after the cottontails had gone away, "or they will be getting into trouble."

"Hold," said Nibbler, after he and his friend had circled around among the pines, the spruce and the balsams, "I do believe that I smell fresh pine-needles."

"So do I," replied Strong Legs, "and there they are!" Together they hopped across the ice of a little stream, and began nibbling at a branch, which, being heavily laden with snow, hung close to the ground.

"Doesn't it seem strange that Old Man Cotton should still insist on living in that hollow spruce tree?" said Nibbler, referring

to a queer old cottontail who lived both winter and summer in a log.

"Very strange indeed," replied a voice in the wood nearby.

Strong Legs and Nibbler squatted close to the ground. Their jumpers quivered, being ready for a terrible leap.

"Don't get scared," said the voice again, "but come right in and help yourselves. I'm not going to pull your short tails, but I wouldn't mind having a little of your fur to keep my feet warm. I've just finished dining and you are welcome to what remains."

Thereupon there stalked from the bushes Sable Prowler, the raven. His beak bore many traces of the feast he had been having all the day. He had gorged himself so full that he could not spread his wings to fly, but strutted along, dragging his tail in the snow.

"That's you, is it?" queried Nibbler.

"Yes, that is me. But is that you Nibbler and Strong Legs? Come closer that I may look into your faces. Ah, I can see now. You know, my eyesight is becoming very poor."

The truth was that the raven had been so greedy and had sunk his beak into the feast so far, that his shrewd eyes had become filled.

"How does it come, Mr. Raven, that you are roosting on the ground? Rather bare feet you have got to be standing in the snow," said Strong Legs.

"'Ho, Ho, good evening, gentlemen!' said Mr. Sly Nose."
(Page 86)

"Oh, you see gentlemen, I don't mind the cold at all when I have plenty to eat. But for what are you prowling around? I'm sure there is no pennyroyal-tea hereabouts."

"We're looking for some sassafras," said Strong Legs.

"Sassafras. Ha, ha, ha!" wheezed the raven. "Sassafras! How funny that must feel in one's stomach! But where are you making your homes now? It's been a long time since I have seen either of you."

"We're staying in Blackberry Grove," replied Strong Legs.

"Mr. Fox has been anxious to make your acquaintance this long time. He's a good fellow, only he gnaws his bones so awfully clean," said the raven.

The mention of Sly Nose made the Messrs. Cottontail shake their heads in horror. But when Sable Prowler waddled up to Strong Legs and began wiping his dirty beak on the cottontail's furry coat, Strong Legs turned about and gave the raven such a hard blow with his hind legs that the latter rolled over and over in the snow. This rude shock awakened the raven from his stupor.

Sable Prowler jumped to his feet in anger. At the same time there was a chattering laugh behind the cottontails and upon turning themselves about they saw Sly Nose looking at them with gleaming eyes. He was right at the point where the Messrs. Cottontail had entered the thicket with the raven.

Strong Legs and Nibbler started to run. Their big legs stirred up flurries of snow, as they went around and around looking for a way of escape. But on all sides were steep walls, save where the grinning fox stood. Now they knew they were in his trap, from which a cottontail was never known to have escaped.

"Ho, ho, good evening gentlemen!" said Sly Nose to Strong Legs and Nibbler, who, when they found they could not escape, sat down in a corner panting. "I'm glad to see that you gentlemen of Blackberry Grove have come to visit me. I hope my friend, Sable Prowler, has invited you to dine with him?"

"Oh yes, oh yes," croaked the raven in his ugly manner.

"However," continued the fox, "you will not refuse, I am sure to take a few bites with me? Permit Sable Prowler to conduct you to the feast."

Sable Prowler stalked toward the cottontails, not to invite them to eat but to be eaten. While he was attempting to drive them around toward the fox, he came too close to Strong Legs, and again he went over before the cottontail's jumpers. The cottontails knew that if they went near Sly Nose, who was guarding the door to his trap, they would soon be furnishing a feast for him, and Sable Prowler would then pick their bones.

Sable Prowler now flew up in anger and began flapping and

pecking poor Strong Legs and Nibbler with all his might. Down he would dart at them, sinking his claws into them, and pulling out pieces from their warm coats. Slowly he was driving them around toward the open mouth of the fox and soon that terrible fellow would have had them between his jaws.

"Ha, I'll have those fellows now, that I've waited for so long," laughed Sly Nose. But just at the moment he thought he had Nib-

Messrs. Cottontail legging it off through the snow.

bler under his paws, he felt something peck him on the nose. It blinded him with its flapping wings; it scratched like a cat. He rolled himself over and over in the snow to rid himself of the pest whatever it was. He struck at it with his fore feet, but it stuck to him like a stinging bee. By rubbing his head in the snow he at

length felt free of the flapping, pecking thing. However, just as he looked up he saw Messrs. Cottontail legging it off through the snow in the direction of Blackberry Grove. The fat feast had escaped him.

There stood Sable Prowler, a sorry sight. His feathers were ruffled, and wet as if he had been in a rain storm. Who had done all the mischief? Mr. Fox sniffed and scratched the snow. "Ah," said he at length. He had found a feather and it belonged to Beggar Tom the moosebird, who had befriended the cottontails.

"Chipper took his station on the watch-tower."

(Page 89)

# hipper the Woodchuck.

CHIPPER appeared at the entrance to Hole Number 1, Sassafras Street, Woodchuck Town. There were half-a-dozen younger heads in sight further up the hill. A sharp whistle from Captain Chub, in Sycamore Avenue, brought everyone to a squat of attention, in honor to Old Chipper, the veteran well digger who had just awakened from his sleep.

Chipper took his station on the watch tower, formed of gravel which he had excavated from his den, and motionless as the old tree snag, beneath whose protecting roots he had burrowed, viewed hill and valley, Cattail Swamp and Moose Bottoms beyond. The old chuck was cautious, and if a cattail-stem nodded the least bit, his bright little eyes were fastened upon its movements to note anything suspicious of an enemy's presence.

Hark! Every short tail jerked; every body was faultlessly erect to Chipper's whistle of danger. "Right about! In with you!" was the order, and every chuck disappeared in his home. Chipper was over cautious because he was hungry. When he had a full stomach and was sleepy, he would not have paid any attention to the "rat-tat" of a sap-sucker, that had now sent him and his neighbors so quickly to cover.

After a silence of a few minutes all heads appeared again. "Rump-ta-tat-phit-thump." Fussy, of Number 5 Sassafras Street, had carelessly started a stone down the hill which caught Old Chipper on the head.

"Chat-t-t-t-t-tr-r-r, C-c-c-c-e——." The anger of Chipper was up, against his neighbor. "What's the matter with you, you fumbler? Will you never learn how to take care of those feet of yours?" chattered he. "Clean those stones away from your hole now. What business have you to be throwing the dirt outside your home so carelessly?" And Chipper ran up to an elm sprout and nipped off some bark to stop an itching on his nose caused by the bite of a bluebottle fly.

Fussy danced about, obeying orders, getting more dirt on his face and legs than he cleared away. Fussy was a constant source of worry to Chipper throughout the entire summer, because he was always doing something contrary to woodchuck regulations and pru-

dence. His den had more galleries and rooms than a meadow mouse haunt, but not one of them had the finishing touches that Chipper always gave to his work. He could dig a hole quicker than anyone else in Woodchuck Town, and struck gravel every time; this soaked up the water that ran in during a heavy rain.

While all woodchucks are born with a certain knowledge of how to sink a home, there was many a trick that Old Chipper had learned by experience. For instance, he always said that when you are looking for a site on which to excavate a home for summer, follow a fence well hedged with blackberry bushes and you'll always come to some wild-cherry sprouts, and maybe a heap of stones that the farmer threw up against them. Then start the hole right down at the side of the fence. First dig a shallow one out toward the field. Then come back and sink a much deeper one around under the stone heap and wild-cherry roots. That's the one to live in. The hunter will always dig along the shallow one.

A feeling of hunger, bothering the stomach of Chipper, he decided to go over and see how the young clover was coming on at the other side of Blackberry Grove. A few snips of pennyroyal gathered along the way would brace him up somewhat.

Running along under the cover of briar tangle and fallen limbs, he struck the main street of the grove, just as Strong Legs the cotton-

tail nodded off to sleep beneath a tuft of grass which screened him from observation, besides gathering the heat of the sun's rays. "If there ever was a foolish lot it's those cottontails," said Chipper, spying Strong Legs asleep. I've often warned that fellow against such habits. Why, any hunter could come along and pick him up and put him in a bag before he'd get awake."

The woodchuck approached close to Strong Legs' bungalow, and was commenting on the carelessness of the cottontail, when a long, powerful leg, with some pretty sharp claws, shot out and punted the woodchuck over on his side. It was done so quickly that Chipper hardly knew how it happened. Strong Legs, leaping from beneath the tuft, was facing him, ears thrown forward in fighting attitude, when Chipper got himself straightened out. On seeing who it was, the cottontail was sorry because Chipper had turned over to him many a nice comfortable den on the hillside, which would have cost him long days of labor to dig.

"I'm sorry," said Strong Legs; "I thought it was one of those prying chipmunks, when I felt that grass tickle my right ear."

"I want you to understand, Strong Legs," chattered the angry woodchuck, "that I haven't got time to go around tickling other peoples' ears. You needn't make any excuses to me. I suppose this is

the reward I get for letting you sleep in that den of mine under that stone heap, over there at Crow's Nest?"

"Indeed, Mr. Chipper, I'm grateful to you, and if you'll listen to me I'll explain to you how I knew there was someone behind me. You see, when you bumped against that blackberry stem, you awakened me. Now, while I don't like spider webs, because they stick to my nose and fur, they're just as good as a telephone at times. That one spun from the blackberry stem to the roof of my summer house, shook the sprig that tickled my ear when you came by, and I was thinking it was a chipmunk and I did want to punish that fellow."

"Yes, and if it had been Terrible Claws, the owl, instead of me, he'd be eating you now. Danger is pretty close when it tickles you in the ear, Strong Legs. I wouldn't sleep in that grass shack of yours for five meals of spring clover. Why, every fox in this section would know how to find you under that."

"Yes, but every fox, Mr. Chipper, knows where you sleep, and just at what time of the day you go out to take your meals and he can lay for you. It was just yesterday that I saw Sly Nose hiding behind that heap of brush above your home. He was licking his chops, and if it hadn't been for the bothersome flies that buzzed around his nose, he would have waited until he had got you. S-s-t, what was that?"

Strong Legs and Chipper both sat upright on their hind legs, at a noise like a fox bounding along through the brush, but which was really some partridges dusting themselves in the depths of the thicket. A spider which had been laying its eggs on the under side of a leaf, and sewing them in with its web, crawled up over the back of Strong Legs, stretching out the web as it went. This became entangled in the cottontail's fur. Strong Legs felt something on his back and leaped into the air to shake it off. After him came the fluttering leaf. The big rabbit was almost scared into a fit, and with a mighty leap he cleared his summer home and went dashing away through Blackberry Grove like mad. Chipper, thinking that the cottontail had seen a fox, followed in the best manner that he could. The fluttering leaf on the tail of Strong Legs was his guide, and the two cut circle after circle around through the thicket.

Strong Legs squeaked with alarm every time he looked back and saw the fluttering leaf. Chipper panted for the want of breath, but he was determined not to be left by the rabbit. Away they went, past cottontail lanes and streets, summer houses and sunning-sheds. Over they went upon King Cotton, who was washing his hind leg into respectability. He too joined the race. Owing to the shortness of his legs Chipper got behind sometimes, but he made up by cutting across, instead of going around in a circle, cottontail style. By the

time they had gotten five times around Blackberry Grove there were at least half a dozen other cottontails in the merry chase, Strong Legs still in the lead with the flag on his tail, and Chipper still in the rear. But the latter had no longer any chance of keeping up with a crowd of terror-stricken cottontails. "Highty-tighty, highty-tighty, old man, what is all this circus performance about?" called someone to Chipper as he passed through under Grapevine Swing. He stopped and looking up saw Slim Nose, the raccoon, out on the front porch of his den in the oak. "What in the world is the matter with you, Chipper? You'll have the aches so bad tomorrow morning you won't be able to stretch those hind legs of yours, without crying 'ouch.' However, twenty swipes with the tongue and a little pokeberry juice will make that all right. But what were you racing after those cottontails for?"

"Strong Legs said he heard something suspicious, and I was willing to believe him because my hearing isn't as good as it used to be."

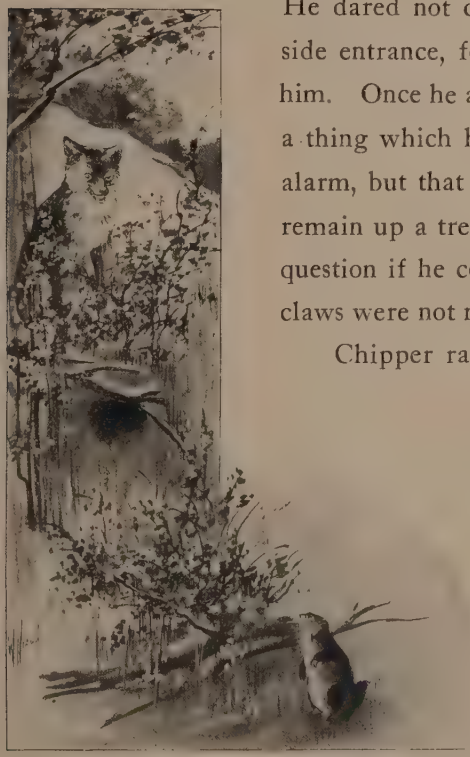
"Why, do you know, Chipper, that big cottontail had the cause for the whole affair hanging to his own tail. I got a scare once, in just that very manner. Strong Legs will soon have Sly Nose after him, and then he'll have to run. But, do you know, the new corn is coming on finely; it won't be another week until we can have what

I call real good eating. I've been having nothing but crickets and June bugs for the past month. Frogs legs were awfully scarce this year. If you want to enjoy a good sight just take a walk down to the corn patch."

"I think I'll go down and get a little clover," replied Chipper, "I don't feel just like myself after taking that long run."

The coon went back into his den while the woodchuck trotted off toward the clover patch. On the way he thought he would take a look into his chum Sneezer's quarters. Sneezer chose to live in the forest, rather than have his home in Woodchuck Town where there were so many noisy young fellows to bother him. Chipper slipped through a thorn tangle and came out at Sneezer's side door. Strange to say, he found that entrance filled up with dead leaves and sticks. Sneezer had evidently not used it for some time past. Chipper concluded that he would have to go around to the front door, but he did it very cautiously, for he suspicioned that something might not be right. Sneaking along as quietly as he could, he saw Sly Nose the fox, squatting above the den, ready to pounce upon Sneezer whenever he should appear in his doorway. It was about time for Sneezer to take his regular sundown lunch of clover, and Chipper feared that before he could give his companion the signal of alarm the fox would have him between his teeth. The cold chills ran over the old chuck

at the thought. He dared not make the slightest noise, for then the fox would be after him and there wasn't a good hole on this side of Blackberry Grove that he could remember. He dared not clean out the leaves from the side entrance, for the fox would surely hear him. Once he almost decided to climb a tree, a thing which he seldom did, and sound the alarm, but that meant that he would have to remain up a tree all night, and it would be a question if he could hold on that long, as his claws were not made for climbing.



He saw Sly Nose the fox, squatting above the den.

Chipper raised on his hind legs at a familiar sound. The fox pricked up his ears at the same and crouched lower behind his screen of leaves which had drifted above Sneezer's den and prepared his muscles for a terrible spring that was intended to furnish him a dinner such as he had

been longing for. A second chatter, just as if coming from his den, told Chipper that Sneezer was ready for his lunch, and that he was coming out. He expected the fox to spring any minute. But why was Sneezer so foolish as to announce to his enemy just when he was coming? Chipper could not understand that. An old chuck would never think of such a thing. "He might just as well come right out and invite the fox to come and eat him," thought Chipper, half angry that Sneezer should be so foolish. The chattering continued, getting louder and louder, and the fox prepared himself for the fatal spring. Chipper just sat there on his hind legs, unable to think of a single thing that he could do to call off the fox.

"Ch-hr-r-r-r-r-r." The noise seemed to be getting awfully close to his ears. How could that be? Was Sneezer working his way out the side door? No, the leaves were motionless. The fox licked his chops while the old chuck puzzled his brain. "Your hearing is getting awfully bad," said a voice which Chipper knew belonged to Sneezer. Chipper turned his head in every direction, but could see nothing of his old chum. Finally looking down at the roots of a dogwood tree, right beside him, he saw the gray head of Sneezer appearing in a 'possum nest. Chipper slipped over to the root.

"Come in," said Sneezer.

"There isn't room," replied Chipper.

"Put in your nose and see."

The chief of Woodchuck Town climbed down into the 'possum nest, which to his surprise had been hollowed out by Sneezer along the root, and then down into the ground to his old quarters.

"Did you ever see anything finer than this?" proudly asked Sneezer.

"I will admit that I never did," replied Chipper, in his wonder scratching an ear with his hind leg. "I see now why you don't use that old side door any more."

"I wouldn't be so foolish as to have but one door, Chipper. I was out this morning, and Sly Nose was sitting above that hole then. I brought back some dry marsh grass for a bed. Curl yourself up and try it."

The two wise old chucks snug and cosy, after satisfactorily placing themselves on their couches of grass, chatted over affairs that interest woodchucks only, while they chewed some rare, sweet roots, that Sneezer had brought from his storehouse in a corner of his den.

# Shrewd Eye's Attempt to Fool the Bear.

"WELL, WELL; I do believe that here comes old Grumbler!" remarked Shrewd Eye, the raven, as he jerked up his head at a slight noise made by a grizzled bear that came shuffling along. Shrewd Eye had not yet shaken the dew from himself, for it was early in the morning and the first pine squirrels were just tuning up their voices for a good chatter.

"Can that really be you, Grumbler?" asked the raven in an uncertain tone, when the bear had almost reached the tree upon which he had roosted during the night.

A surprised grunt from the bear and a look from the bird at the pointed nose, as he turned it up to see who was talking to him, told the raven that he was right in his guess. No one could mistake that snout after they had seen it once, for it looked shrewd and slender

"'Well, well, I do believe that here comes old Grumbler!' remarked Shrewd Eye."

(Page 100)

enough to hunt out every secret corner of an ant town or smell a bees' nest a long distance off.

"What makes you so poor?" queried Shrewd Eye; "you must have starved since you left these woods at the beginning of winter. That hair of yours looks worse than that on a bull moose when he is angry. And, your nose, I never saw it look so pointed." Hereupon the raven began to laugh until the forest rang with that shrill voice of his.

Shrewd Eye had some reason for being surprised at the appearance of Grumbler, for he certainly wore a sorry looking coat. The old reddish hairs had not been shed yet, and they stuck from his sides and back like the quills of a porcupine. His nose was well plastered with earth and decayed wood, for he had been searching in every old log that he came across, for bugs and ants; but his terrible appetite refused to be sated. It was only too true that he had not had a good meal since he had left that part of the forest and gone further south in search of dens in which to spend the winter.

The winter was a cold and long one, and Grumbler had slept throughout the entire time, save a few hours during a thaw, when he had left his den in search of a bite to eat, or to see what were the signs, if there were any, of the coming spring. Not so many days before this he had left the cave in the rocks, and was now hunting food. He

knew very well that there were no berries yet, but he thought that in the sunshiny spots the ants ought to be out working; and possibly he might find a bees' nest that would have some honey left over from last summer.

"Well," said Grumbler in a wise way, for hunger always makes a wise bear wiser than ever, "since I appear so slim to you, suppose you jump down and help me find something to eat. It looks to me as though you ravens did not overfeed yourselves during the cold weather, for not one trace of a bone have I seen, that you have had a chance to pick. Your friends, the wolves, must have had strong appetites of their own, or been less kind to you, than you claimed."

With that Grumbler began tearing the bark off a dead tree. He licked his mouth satisfactorily when he scooped in with his long tongue almost the entire population of an ant town, besides several fat young bugs that had crept out to begin their borings.

"Oh, no," exclaimed the raven, in answer to the invitation of the bear, "things that you like and things that I like, you see, are so very different in kind, that I fear I could not suit you in the choice of food that I would make. My eyes and nose were fitted for an entirely different purpose than yours. However, one thing I know to be true, and that is, that you like honey. If you wish to know, I

can tell you where you can find a rich store of it, for I saw swarms of bees coming and going at the tree."

When the raven mentioned honey, the bear ceased his search for ants and bugs, for fear the raven would say something that he might not hear. Grumbler was a great lover of honey, ever since the time his mother had robbed a bees' nest in Beaver Valley and he had secured his first taste of the sweets.

"Why, of course, Mr. Shrewd Eye, I would be glad to know where the tree is that you speak of. If you will be so kind as to tell me, I shall repay the debt when I become strong again, and have this terrible appetite of mine satisfied."

Grumbler spoke as politely as he knew how, for he would have given anything just then for a taste of honey. But he knew that the raven was a wise fellow, and sometimes did not always tell the truth.

Shrewd Eye was by this time feeling quite important that he was able to say something to interest so great a fellow as the bear. Ever since Grumbler had insulted him down in Moose Bottoms, when he was picking choice morsels from the bones of a deer that the wolves had killed, he had desired to settle accounts with the bear. Grumbler had shamed the raven for eating so greedily, and now here was the bear just as greedily licking up ants and all kinds of bugs. This was his opportunity to fool the bear.

"Mr. Grumbler," said the raven, prinking several of his feathers that had become ruffled, "it pleases me very much to tell you about the honey. But, of course being a poor raven that must hunt for a living both winter and summer, and not being able, as do you, to sleep through the cold winter days, I feel that I have the right of asking just one favor of you."

"Certainly," replied Grumbler, "I have always tried to be a good friend of the ravens. I have never taken anything that belongs to them, neither have I robbed their nests at any time, as so many other animals have done."

"Very well, Grumbler, can you tell me anything about the secrets of Silent Wing? You know he is the raven that always has plenty to eat, but no one knows where he goes to dine. What I want to know is, whether you have ever seen him in the act of picking any bones, and where he was while he was doing it?"

A cunning look came into the eyes of Grumbler. He said he had seen Silent Wing, and knew just where he went to eat, sometimes. It was by the big elm the beavers had attempted to cut down.

The raven nodded his head, for he knew the exact place of which the bear was speaking. "Now, in return for your kindness, Grumbler," said he, "I will say that the bees' nest of which I spoke, is in a hole in the old cedar, where many years ago, before he was

caught by Sly Nose the fox, Horn Ear the owl, had his sleeping place. You know where that is, Grumbler?"

"Why, I could find that place without my nose or eyes. I've been over there many a time to take a bath in the wallow which is just to the left of that tree. I thank you very much, Shrewd Eye, and I hope I shall see you many times this summer. I must be going now for I expect to sleep in Sniffer's old den tonight. It is not so very far from that bees' nest and I can get up the next morning and have a good feast."

Just as Grumbler finished his parting speech, a peculiar noise came to the ears of both the raven and the bear. Another sort of a "sniff" caused them to look up in the tree on whose lower limb the raven was sitting, and they saw Mouser, an honest old screech owl, blinking his eyes. He had been awakened from his nap by the conversation between the bear and the raven, and before he could speak had to sneeze out of his nose a little fur of the field mouse he had eaten the night before.

"Who are you?" he inquired, in that quavering voice of his that makes children so afraid when they hear him at night. "Oh, yes, I can see plainer now. It is you, Shrewd Eye and Grumbler."

"This is a strange place for you to be sleeping in," said the raven. "You certainly must have caught a cold, snoozing up there in

the draft. Your screech is not half as loud as it is at night, when one would think you were as big as Terrible Claws, the snowy owl."

"I am feeling very well," replied the owl in a knowing manner. "Five good fat mice, are more than I usually get in one night. I'd much rather take my naps in a bower these fine spring days, than be cooped up in some stuffy tree. But, speaking of hollow trees, Mr. Shrewd Eye, I think you must be mistaken about there being a bees' nest in the one where Horn Ear used to live. The other night

They both disappeared in the forest.

I went in there to keep watch of a squirrel that was out rather late in the evening, and I found it a very dismal place. The bugs and woodpeckers had many holes bored into the den, so it is not even fit for a 'possum to live in.

"I think that was the very night I met Silent Wing roosting in a cedar; he said he had got ready for a journey to the south where he knew he could find more to eat than in this part of the forest. So, I

rather think, Mr. Grumbler, and I beg your pardon for disputing your word to the raven, that you must have been mistaken about your having seen Silent Wing recently."

Both the raven and the bear knew they had been caught telling things that were not true. Shrewd Eye jumped to another branch as if he did not hear the last remarks of the owl, while the bear began turning over some dead leaves with his nose, apparently looking for bugs. Before Mouser could understand what was the matter with the two story-tellers, they both disappeared in the forest, taking opposite paths.

# eath of Long Nose.

LONG NOSE, the alligator, was the shrewdest of all animals that lived in the vicinity of Blue Mud Swamp. Whether it was because of his long nose, or because of his sharp eyes, that he was so cunning, no one exactly knew. At any rate, one after another of the cottontails in that region disappeared, and although Long Nose had never been seen in the act of capturing a rabbit, there was no doubt that he was the one to blame for the acts of murder.

Mrs. Maria Cottontail was out walking with her family one day, giving her two children lessons, so that if they were ever pursued by an enemy they would know just where and how to escape by some secret path or trick. She was coming along the edge of the swamp pointing out to her boys, Thumper and Sleepy Eye, the tracks of a

Mr. Fox. "Beware of him," said he, "for his legs will tire you, once he has whetted that awful appetite of his."

"But he'll not catch me," boasted Thumper. Thumper had received that name because from the time he first opened his eyes in a woodchuck hole, down in a clover patch, his jumping hind legs were very thick and strong. He delighted in thumping the ground with them, and had done it so often he could rival Mrs. Cottontail herself in this strange use of his hind legs, which is practised by all members of the rabbit family. Thumper was almost as large as his mother, while Sleepy Eye was only a little chubby fellow, who liked to lie in the sunshine and snooze.

"Be careful, my son, be very careful, that you do not come to grief by your boasting, for the foxes eat—O horrors! Can it be true that over there sits Long Nose the alligator?" screamed Mrs. Cottontail. Poor Sleepy Eye and his mother trembled like leaves, at sight of the knotty alligator, who was sitting in the marsh grass, holding his front feet in a pitiful manner, and shedding great tears. Thumper was not the least frightened, but began to beat the ground with his hind legs, as a small boy does his Christmas drum. He wanted to fight Long Nose, and it was all his mother could do to keep him from rushing at the monster alligator.

"Booh-ooh-ooh," continued Long Nose with his weeping, the

large tears running down his ugly nose. "Oh, who will show me the way back to the water where I can bathe my poor roasting back? How foolish I was to wander so far away. Booh-ooh-ooh."

Now, while Long Nose was making all this fuss, he was keeping a sharp eye on Mrs. Maria Cottontail and her family. Sleepy Eye began to forget his fears when he heard the alligator talking so innocently. Even Mrs. Cottontail could not see any particular reason why the alligator should want to do anyone wrong, now that he was in trouble himself. But Thumper became more anxious than ever to fight Long Nose.

"Come on, you old long-snouted coward," shouted Thumper, beating the earth and hopping away from his mother and Sleepy Eye, who still sat in doubt, "there's plenty of mud and water over this way for you to plaster that knotty nose of yours."

Long Nose winked out of the corner of his eye, as much as to say, "you will soon find it is more than mud and water I am after," and he began waddling after Thumper in that slow, lazy gait of his.

Mrs. Cottontail, and her son Sleepy Eye, did not have the courage to accompany Thumper, but hopped slowly in the rear of the alligator. Sleepy Eye by this time had his curiosity excited and went closer to the rough, horned tail of the swamp monster. He twisted his nose this way and that way in the attempt to make himself ac-

"'Oh horrors! Can it be true that there sits Long Nose, the alligator?' screamed Mrs. Cottontail."

(Page 109)

quainted with all he could learn about the alligator. Long Nose seemed to pay no attention to the young cottontail's examination, and Sleepy Eye went still closer.

Mrs. Cottontail had just stopped for a moment to taste of a fragrant plantain leaf, when she heard a terrible "swish." She looked around and Sleepy Eye was nowhere to be seen. Long Nose was now sitting upright, opening and shutting those jaws of his with much satisfaction. Poor Sleepy Eye had gone to fill a place in the alligator's stomach. His curiosity had led him too near the alligator's tail, and with one stroke of it Long Nose had swept the young cottontail around into his wide-open mouth.

Poor Mrs. Cottontail panted with grief at the loss of her son. She ran she knew not where. Those strong hind-legs of hers carried her through the marsh grass at a great speed. At length, when she was out of breath, she drew herself together under the brown leaves of a thistle stalk.

"Thump, thump, thump," went a succession of sounds, which told Mrs. Cottontail that her son Thumper was near. Soon he came hopping by. He was furious with anger. He would make short spurts, and then strike his hind legs on the ground in a manner that made his mother tremble with fear. But this did not last long, for

both Mrs. Cottontail and her son were hungry, and together they went searching for fresh clover.

By this time, Long Nose the alligator, was back in his favorite sunning place, on a log near a slimy pool. He was so well satisfied with the result of his last scheme, that he paid no attention to the flies that sat on his very nose. At any other time they would have shared the fate of Sleepy Eye. Long Nose had just tasted of something better than flies, and he intended to have some more of the same kind of food. So there he slept all the day, and only rose when the sun had gone down, and his back was becoming chilled by the evening breeze. Then he lazily let himself drop off the log into the pool.

The next morning Long Nose was out bright and early, with an empty stomach and big hopes for another dinner like the one he had had the day before. So he went to the same spot on the edge of the swamp where he had caught the young cottontail, and was prepared to begin his wailings, should any foolish animal happen along that way. Long Nose had almost dropped off into a dream, when a rustle in the dead grass awakened him. Ha, there came the very object he was looking for—a fine, plump, young cottontail. Long Nose never paid enough attention to rabbits to distinguish them by their features, and so he did not know that this was Thumper, the fellow he had seen the day before.

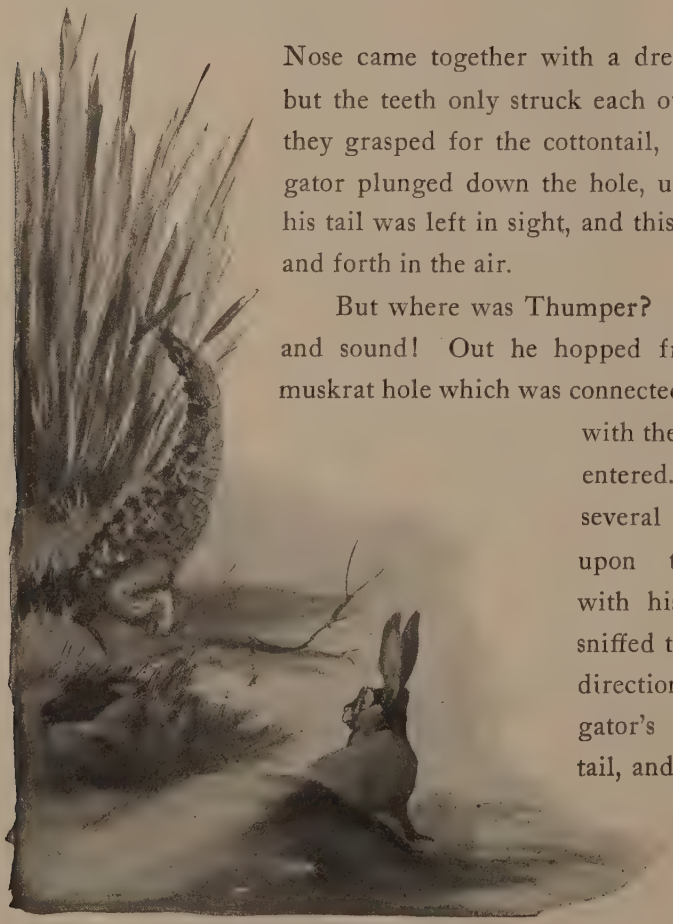
## *Death of Long Nose.*

Long Nose began to moan about his roasting back, and his being lost. "Booh-ooh-ooh," he went, louder and louder. But Thumper did not pay any attention to him. Long Nose could not understand why, if the cottontail was asleep, he could not be awakened. At length he dropped down upon all fours and started toward the rabbit. Thumper did not move until the alligator was almost upon him, when he gave a short hop into the bushes. Long Nose continued to follow him. Thumper made another jump, when he thought the teeth of the alligator came too near for comfort.

Thus the two moved on through the long grass of the marsh. Long Nose began to get irritated; he tried to flop his tail around and strike the cottontail. In this he failed, for Thumper always hopped out of reach.

Now this part of the swamp was a favorite place for muskrats, and many were the wells they had sunk there. Thumper came to one of these holes as he kept hopping away from the alligator. "I guess I'll get you now," said Long Nose, when he saw Thumper stop as if pondering whether he would leap across the hole or go around it. Slowly the alligator crept upon the cottontail, quietly pulling himself along so he would not frighten his intended victim.

Thumper could almost feel the hot breath of the monster behind him. He drew himself together for a big jump. The jaws of Long



The alligator plunged down the hole.

Nose came together with a dreadful sound, but the teeth only struck each other. Again they grasped for the cottontail, and the alligator plunged down the hole, until but half his tail was left in sight, and this swung back and forth in the air.

But where was Thumper? He was safe and sound! Out he hopped from another muskrat hole which was connected by a tunnel with the hole he had entered. He gave several sharp blows upon the ground with his hind legs, sniffed the air in the direction of the alligator's wriggling tail, and slowly hopped away as if nothing had happened.

## *Death of Long Nose.*

It was in the evening of the same day, when Thumper and his mother came strolling among the muskrat holes, looking for choice sprigs of grass, when they saw the horned tail of Long Nose hanging limply to one side. The alligator was dead with his head sunk in the muskrat hole, from which he could not escape. Thumper and his mother hopped up to it, sniffed several times, and passed on to the hillside, where they knew there was some fresh, young clover.

# Woodchuck's Victory.

WITH a roar that made the mouse jump, and old Judge Bear blink his eyes, King Lion called the meeting to order. Cottontail, the secretary, read off the names, and all answered to roll call except Mr. Donkey, who took his place later. Mr. Dragon Fly, who then began his story, spoke very rapidly and never stopped but for a second or two now and then to take a breath. The audience did not dare go to sleep, for whenever Mr. Fly saw anyone who was not paying attention, he would jump right down from his seat on the timothy stalk, never stopping his story the while, and tap the sleeper on the end of the nose.

The meeting had been called to settle a dispute between Mr. Skunk and Mr. Woodchuck about a den on the hillside. Woodchuck said he had done the digging, and had fixed for himself a snug bed of leaves and marsh grass, but every time he wanted to take a nap

Mr. Skunk came snooping around, and sometimes even dared to flop himself down in the bed to which he had not the least claim.

But the real cause of the trouble was, as Mr. Woodchuck explained, that Skunk had about himself the odor of something which made the Woodchuck very faint, just as when he ate too much clover. No matter how often he chewed of a choice medicine weed that grew down by the marsh, he could not rid himself of the ugly smell.

Mr. Skunk presented his side of the question, also. That very den which the Woodchuck said was his by right of digging, he, the said Mr. Skunk, claimed had been dug a long time ago, and he had gone in now and then, made the den larger, scratched out new rooms and pushed out, with much trouble, the stones and dirt that had fallen down; while Mr. Woodchuck was sunning himself along the hillside, or filling himself with juicy grass. Then, when he had grown fat and sleepy, he came back and picked out the choice hole in the hill, which was the den in dispute.

To settle the dispute, Mr. Dragon Fly had been sent out to inquire of the River Tribes their opinions on the matter, and having now returned, was reading what he had learned on the trip. When he stopped to take his first breath, the donkey, who was not very much concerned about the dispute, pointed his hoof in a taunting

way at the Hippopotamus, while the latter was looking in the direction of the river and wishing he were in its cooling waters.

"I called on the Frog Family," said the Dragon Fly, "and I spoke to the Muskrats; I inquired of the Sandpiper, and had a chat with the Otter. I don't believe there is a single one of the River people I did not see. But Mr. Frog said that he did not have any time to idle away, as he was busy sinking a well, in which he expected to stay when the days became cool and chilly. The Muskrat would not even take time to hear what I had to say, but went right on cutting down heaps of cattails and marsh grass, plastering them together with mud. The Sandpiper whisked his tail and started to run along the beach, holding up his head in a proud manner."

Here Dragon Fly caused a little disturbance by waking up Mr. Hedgehog, who had fallen asleep during the reading of the report. Mr. Fly being back again in his seat, so quickly that the Hog did not know who had disturbed him, the fellow with the quills began arguing with the Lizard. But King Lion roared for silence, and peace was once more restored. Dragon Fly proceeded:

"After leaving Sandpiper, who said he never cared for company, I looked across the river toward the marsh, and there saw Mr. Potter, Mrs. Potter and the whole family of little beavers rushing back and forth as if they had gone mad. Some were busy cutting

"King Lion called the meeting to order."
(Page 116)

down trees, others, using their tails as paddles, smoothed mud over the heaps of logs and grass they had collected.

"That I might talk with Mr. Potter I had to keep flying along with him wherever he went, for not one moment would he waste, as he said, by stopping to listen to me. He could not understand why anyone should be so foolish as to quarrel over a little hole in the hill."

" 'Just look,' said he, 'at the home that I must build every year, for when the floods of spring come they break into our dams in spite of all we can do. I always get the best of mud, which can be found over there where the waters flow very slowly. This, when dry, keeps out the water. But almost every year we are compelled to leave our dens, for the warmest ones are far down underneath the grass and logs. Sometimes, too, that Mr. Beaver, who lives down where the river makes a bend, gets into trouble, when the ice and snow are frozen over his den. Then he brings his family up here, and we live together."

" 'But,' said I, 'how about Mr. Skunk and Mr. Woodchuck?' "

"Just at that moment, a tree fell, having been cut by one of the younger beavers, and I was glad to get out of the way. I was so tired out, by trying to keep up with Mr. Potter as he went about his work, that I set out for home."

By the time Dragon Fly's speech was ended, many of his hear-

ers were very tired. Even King Lion began to yawn, for this was his sleeping time. Other members of the Night Tribe blinked their eyes, endeavoring to keep awake. The Cricket was the most attentive. He had kept both his ears wide open, and as he swung up and down on the blade of grass humming to himself now and then, he thought out a way to settle the dispute.

When King Lion called for opinions there was silence, save for the snoring of Mr. Hippopotamus. Skunk and Woodchuck looked at each other with angry side glances. When Mr. Cricket saw that no one had anything to say, he jumped upon a tall timothy stem in front of King Lion and in his shrill voice said:

"To settle the dispute between Mr. Woodchuck and Mr. Skunk let us go to the hillside, and the one of the two that can dig the deepest hole while I count twenty, shall have the right to live in the old den." As the Cricket finished speaking there were howls, and squeaks, and hoots of assent from the crowd.

All was excitement. Mr. Fox barked and leaped with joy, at the expectation of seeing such sport. Even Mr. Owl opened his eyes and shook off the stupor that had taken hold of him. All made a rush for the hill and when everything was ready the signal was given by King Lion.

Woodchuck and Skunk fairly flew at their work. They panted

"'Enough!' roared King Lion, as Mr. Cricket chirped 'twenty!'"

(Page 121)

and scratched. Woodchuck struck a root. He tugged a bit, and it looked as though he would be defeated. But the root was only a small one and he soon broke through it. He threw out the earth in almost one continuous stream. Sometimes he growled if he thought Mr. Skunk was getting ahead of him.

Secretary Cottontail became so excited, that he himself began to dig, imagining what he would do in a race of the same kind.

Mr. Lizard could not fully understand the sport, and just as he was looking down the hole to see what Mr. Skunk was doing, the latter threw out some fresh dirt into his eyes, which made him very angry.

"Enough!" roared King Lion, as Mr. Cricket piped "twenty." The Monkey with a cattail stem proceeded to measure the two holes. Mr. Woodchuck was declared the winner. That night poor Mr. Skunk slept in a hollow log that was cold and wet, but the next day he left to hunt another warm den down the river.

# rial of Mr. Hyena.

FOR once all the animals were present at the meeting, although the owl had a hard time of it delivering the message to all of them. Mr. Owl, of course, thought the best time to do this work was in the night. So he flitted about, and almost hooted his throat sore trying to awaken those that were sleeping. But he worked like a good fellow, and now sat blinking his eyes sleepily, because he was tired and longed to be back in the old hollow tree where the sunshine could not hurt his eyes.

Mr. Skunk and Mr. Woodchuck sat side by side, being now the best of friends, for both had become very fat and very sleek on juicy spring clover; so they were in good humor. Even the beaver (Mr. Potter), who is always busy, had been persuaded to leave his work at the dam, on the promise that if the meeting lasted too long, Mr.

Fine Fur, the muskrat, would help him do a little tree cutting. Mr. Bee, and all the insects, were in the happiest of moods. Their legs and bodies smelled of sweet perfume gathered from spring flowers.

All were smiling except Mr. Hyena, who frowned in a terrible manner. He sat upon his haunches, sometimes grumbling to himself and showing two rows of white sharp teeth. However, Mr. Hyena was never known to smile, because, as Dragon Fly said, he ate too rapidly and too much. The food only made him poor and ill-natured. Almost all the other animals were afraid of him, so they left him sitting alone.

It was on Hyena's account that the meeting had been called. He had been getting into all kinds of trouble with the beasts of the forest, and of the field, by his sneaking manner.

"Well," roared Judge Lion, licking off the remaining traces of a good meal, he had had that morning, "What shall be done with Mr. Hyena? He has complained to me that certain of you have been mistreating him, just because his face is ugly. Mr. Cottontail, it is said that you are one of Mr. Hyena's enemies. What have you to say for yourself?"

Hereupon Mr. Rabbit stretched one of his hind legs, then struck it upon the ground as if he were practising his muscles for some future run, or quarrel with an enemy. Throwing one ear forward to

look very wise, and brushing back his long whiskers, the rabbit began:

"I tell you, Judge Lion, that Mr. Hyena is a coward and a sneak, as all animals are whose hind-legs are shorter than their front ones. Here is my friend, the Kangaroo," said he, nodding his head toward another creature that looked very much like himself, except that it was much larger, "he will tell you the same thing. I say again, the Hyena is a coward; and so is Mr. Wolf, who like his chum has a sloping back."

Mr. Cottontail had hardly time to finish his speech when both Mr. Wolf and Mr. Hyena, with howls of anger, made a leap for him. They had wanted to play one of their sly tricks on him before the meeting began, but were afraid of King Lion who declared that everyone of the animals should have justice dealt out to him, at these meetings. Both these fellows loved rabbit meat, and they had set a trap many a time for the fat one who was at the meeting, but they never could catch him.

Mr. Cottontail gave a big leap, popped under Mrs. Cow and leaped clear over the back of Mr. Donkey.

Now Mr. Donkey was present for the first time when King Lion called the meeting to order. However, as usual, he was tired, and had seated himself, wagging his long ears as if he understood everything that was said. Usually he paid no attention to the

speeches, but when Mr. Cottontail spoke of hind-legs, he became very much interested, for he had many uses to which he put his own, and if there was any new way in which he might handle them he wanted to know all about it.

So Mr. Donkey arose to gather into his long ears every point of the conversation. As to whether his hind legs were shorter than his front ones he could not say exactly, and he was trying to decide this point when the furore began.

Struck Mr. Hyena a blow that sent him rolling over many times.

Around and around, and in and out went Mr. Cottontail with Mr. Wolf and Mr. Hyena close after him. The Dragon Fly was knocked off his seat on the timothy stem, and Mr. Bee became so excited and angry that he darted for the first thing that attracted his attention. That was the Hyena's red tongue, now hanging out full length. This he stung good and hard.

Mr. Hyena, forgetting the chase for a moment, to rub his smarting tongue on his foot, stopped behind Mr. Donkey. The fellow with the long ears threw out both his hind legs, and struck Mr. Hyena a blow that sent him rolling over many times, howling with pain.

By this time King Lion had become very angry at the uproar; he gave such a terrible bellow, it brought every one in the courtroom to his senses.

Again there was silence.

"Mr. Cottontail, and Mr. Hyena," said Judge Lion, "step out here, and receive punishment for all this disturbance you have caused."

Mr. Cottontail would much rather have run away to the thicket and hid himself in the brush, but there was no way of escaping now. So out before Judge Lion he went.

Mr. Hyena was so badly bruised, that the assistance of Mr. Monkey was necessary to help him come forward. The latter offered to furnish him with a bamboo crutch, but Hyena rejected the proposal.

"Both of you have acted very shamefully," began Judge Lion; "and you must pay the penalty. Mr. Cottontail, you should not have spoken as you did, especially about so aged an animal as our friend, Mr. Wolf."

"Mrs. Cow gave Mr. Hyena a severe lecturing."

(Page 128)

"He's not a friend of mine," squealed Mr. Cottontail.

"Quiet!" commanded Judge Lion. "Mr. Cottontail, for these two offenses, insulting Mr. Hyena, and Mr. Wolf, you shall remain in the swamp one whole week, eating dry grass. If you come out upon the hillside to get some fresh clover you shall be eaten by any animal that loves rabbit meat."

"Judge, I shall consider it a great favor if you will grant me that permission," spoke up Mr. Hyena, who was anxious to get at Mr. Cottontail.

The animals started for their homes.

"No," said Judge Lion, "I shall keep that pleasure for myself. You, Mr. Hyena, shall remain in your den three days, without fresh bones to pick. Hereafter you will perhaps know how to behave."

"Make Cottontail stay out of my holes," squeaked Muskrat, interrupting at this point.

"Silence!" commanded Judge Lion, "or I shall send you after

Mr. Potter." The dam builder could not endure such foolishness as had been going on among the animals, and he could be seen going over the hill on the way to Beaver Dam.

This ended the meeting for that day and the animals started for their homes. Mrs. Cow and Mr. Hyena happened to go in the same direction. Mrs. Cow, who always observed the best of manners on all occasions, gave Mr. Hyena a severe lecturing. She told him how she had earned a comfortable home and a nice bed of straw by her good behavior; how she never went hungry, but always had a rack full of hay, and how she was loved by her owner. Mr. Hyena, with a shamed face, listened to her attentively, and then trotted off to his cave.

# rs. Molly Sniffer and her Two Cubs.

MOLLY SNIFFER, the big brown bear, had two children, Boxer and Tumbler. Because they could walk the full length of an oak log they considered that they were very wise young bears, and had nothing more to learn; that all they had to do, was to go out and sniff a little to find bees' nests and ant towns.

"See me stand on my hind legs," said Tumbler to Boxer, "you can't do that, and keep your eyes shut."

Boxer took up the challenge, and waddled on two legs along the log until he came to a knot, when he went rolling like a big fuzzy caterpillar down among the leaves. Tumbler proved that he could do it, and he danced along sidewise, hanging his little red tongue out as if he were using that to help balance himself. Whether he was squinting out of the corner of one eye, no one knew but himself. At any rate Boxer accused him, and the two were mixed up in a quarrel,

when their mother came back from Blackberry Grove where she had been gathering some ripe fruit.

Mrs. Sniffer cuffed each of her sons on the ears with her rough paws, until they cried "ouch" more than half a dozen times. Then she took them both down and dipped them in Bear Wallow, which she said was to keep their fur in proper condition during summer-time. They squealed enough before she was half done with them, and when she pulled them out, she made them cut twelve circles around the den so that they wouldn't catch cold. "Now, let me see each one of you shin up that dogwood tree," she commanded, sitting down to superintend the gymnastic exercise.

Tumbler was given the first trial. He scratched the tree's bark off in the start, not knowing exactly how to go about climbing. "Put your feet around it," cried Mrs. Bear, "if you don't do better than that, you are not going to get any dinner."

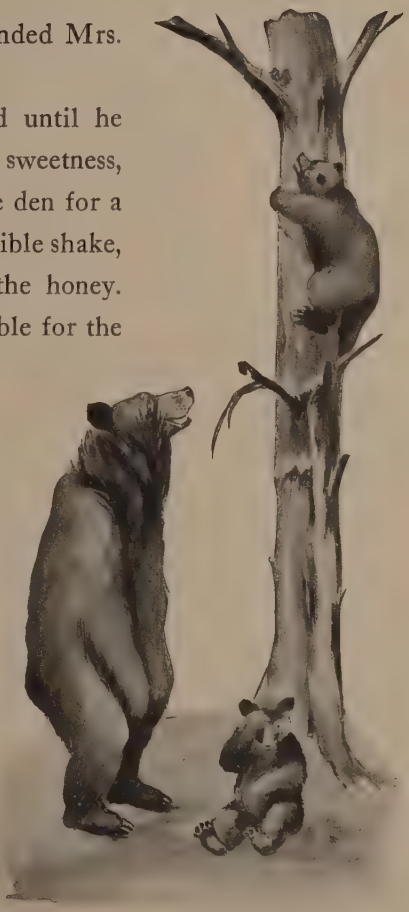
Chasing Tumbler down, she climbed the dogwood tree herself, with two nice chunks of honeycomb in her mouth. These she laid in a fork of the limbs far up the tree. After coming down she said, "If you young fellows can climb up there, you can have a honeycomb apiece; if not, you shall go hungry until evening."

Both the cubs took a run at the tree in their eagerness to get at the

honey. "One at a time," commanded Mrs. Sniffer, pulling Tumbler away.

Boxer scratched and labored until he had almost reached his piece of sweetness, but when his mother went into the den for a few minutes, he gave the tree a terrible shake, and down came both pieces of the honey. Then there was an exciting scramble for the largest piece. When Mrs. Sniffer came out she could not exactly understand how they had gotten the prizes so soon, although she knew they must have been up to their tricks again.

The hour was now at hand for the regular morning foraging expedition, and, with a command that the young bears should follow her, single file, Mrs. Sniffer started off through the forest to look for ants. If



Boxer scratched and labored until he had almost reached his piece of sweetness.

she could not find any, she intended going down to Deer Creek to look for crabs. Tumbler always wanted to be second in the procession, and he had won that place by virtue of a fight he and his brother had in the den, one time while their mother was away on an expedition. So Boxer came after him, biting him in the heels and hanging to his fur when he wanted to jump over a log.

When Mrs. Sniffer scented an ant town, with her long nose, she turned to her children saying: "Which direction would you go now, to get those ants?" wishing to test the smelling powers of her cubs.

Tumbler and Boxer sniffed and sneezed in every direction. They thought they smelled ants, but they could not tell just where the insects were.

Said Boxer, "I believe they are over there in that spruce tree." "Sniff again," said his mother.

"I'm sure I hear them buzzing up in that tree," said Tumbler, looking up among the tree tops. "No, they are right near here on the ground," replied Mrs. Sniffer.

The cubs then went to scratching the leaves about, and smelling in the rotten logs. When Stripes, the ground squirrel, rushed out of a log, and bit Tumbler on the end of his nose, he screeched as though he had been almost killed. Mrs. Bear was disgusted with her two sons.

"You two fellows would starve if I wasn't along to show you how to get something to eat," she scolded. "When I was not as old as you I was left to take care of myself. My mother had been killed by a hunter. Now I want you to do better or I shall have to make each of you take a bitter dose of wild-cherry bark, to sharpen those noses of yours."

Then she waddled over and, turning over a piece of bark, disclosed a fine nest of ants with heaps of eggs that were almost ready to be hatched. The young bears soon licked up every inhabitant of the town, except a few of the wiser ants who had run away and hid under the leaves where the bears could not find them.

While they were eating, a dreadful thing happened to Mrs. Sniffer. The wind blew a dead limb down from the top of a tree, which fell upon the mother bear, crushing her to the earth.

She lay as if dead while the two cubs cried as if their hearts were breaking. They licked her paws and kissed her closed eyelids with their little warm tongues, but she would not awaken. A branch of the dead limb pinned her head to the ground, so they could not lay their furry little heads on hers. Boxer began tugging at the limb. He remembered having seen his mother clearing away the branches that had fallen into the mouth of their den, during a stormy night. Tumbler helped him chew, and their sharp teeth soon

chipped away the snag that pierced the neck of their mother. But still she would not awake. Again they sat on their haunches, and cried, and cried, and cried. Then they ran around in the bushes, whining and calling for help. But now there was no one to heed every little cry of pain or distress.

Both Boxer and Tumbler began to feel a terrible gnawing in their stomachs, and their noses, as if they knew what was demanded of them, began sniffing the air. They were real bears, these two young fellows, and their bear natures began to show themselves. They wandered away from their mother a little, each time they made the circle, and finally could no longer smell her warm body in the air. Boxer growled a little at the noise made by some birds scratching among the leaves. Sure enough he had some spunk. Tumbler did the same thing.

"I'm a bear, a great big bear," they were saying and the hair on their backs would begin to rise at the slightest noise. Those stiff hairs made them feel more courageous than anything else. But neither one could get quite away from the habit of whining, when they were sniffing in hollow logs for some insects to eat. On and on they waddled until they came to the creek for which their mother was headed when she started out with them in the morning. There they became interested in fishing for crabs

"Boxer began tugging at the limb."

(Page 133)

## *Mrs. Sniffer and Her Cubs.*

While the cubs were wandering in the forest, a little leaf loaded down with big drops of dew swayed heavily in the breeze that had sprung up. It was scarcely able to bear its burden longer and when the wind grew a little stronger, the drops of dew rolled off and dropped down upon the mother bear's nose. She was not dead, for her sides were still heaving, and when the dew reached her she stretched out her legs as if she was about to wake up. Then she groaned and opened her eyes. She called for her children but they did not come. They were down at the creek by this time.

Mrs. Sniffer finally arose, whining with pain, and propped herself with the one fore-leg that had not been injured by the falling limb. Then she called for her cubs again, but there was no answer. Limping along she dragged herself back to her den which she found empty. After licking the injured parts of her body well with her tongue, she sought a nearby berry patch. There she filled herself with the ripest berries she could find, and then lay down on the sunny side of a log to rest herself and let her injuries heal. She meant to hunt for her cubs as soon as she would be able to go after them.

Mrs. Sniffer was awakened by the breaking of dead branches in the berry thicket, but she was so stiff, she could not rise to see who the intruder was. Her fears were that it might be Grizzly, a monster

bear, who claimed to be king of that region and who tore anyone with his dreadful claws who dared dispute his claims. He had at one time posted a sign on a tree near the cave, that this was his property in which Mrs. Sniffer had reared her children. She, having no other place to go that was as safe, had dared to live in there among the rocks in spite of Grizzly's threats, that he would one day settle accounts with her. A strong sniff in the direction of the noise told Mrs. Sniffer that it indeed was Grizzly, and the growing of the noise convinced her he was coming in her direction. Her only hope was that he would find enough berries, so that by the time he came up his stomach would be filled and he would be in good humor.

Grizzly, however, did not find enough ripe berries to fill his stomach, for Mrs. Sniffer had eaten the most of them. He saw where she had waded through the patch, and the bristles on his neck were standing erect with anger when he came upon her by the log.

"So you have eaten so much you could not even get out of my way, did you?" growled Grizzly, when he saw Mrs. Sniffer. "I thought I had made it plain that this patch, and that cave you and your youngsters are living in, belongs to me."

"Oh, we are bears, great big bears. We've got claws that are sharper than those of Grizzly. We are the owners of blackberry patches, huckleberry swamps, forests of bees' nests, and creeks that

are full to their banks with crabs. We are the bears of Bruintown, so beware, so beware," came a chorus of voices, but from where, neither Grizzly nor Mrs. Sniffer could tell.

Bruintown was a wonderful region where the bears grew to twice the size of Grizzly because they always had all the honey and fat crabs they could eat. It was a fairyland which every young growler wanted to visit, and many a young boaster had strayed away from his mother into the depths of the forest, hoping to find the wonderful region.

Grizzly cocked his ears, for although he had grown too old to believe fairy stories, yet his mouth always watered for honey, and he listened attentively to the strange voices saying: "Big, big bears from Bruintown." Mrs. Sniffer, who had been frightened almost to death by the approach of Grizzly, was only too glad his attention was turned from her, for he certainly would have torn her to pieces had he been left alone. Grizzly, possibly thinking the sounds came from the ground beneath his feet, began pawing up the dead leaves. Then he walked among the berry bushes a few steps, and listened again. The mention of his name lured him farther away from Mrs. Sniffer, who was glad of a chance to escape.

Whining with pain at every movement, Mrs. Sniffer dragged herself into the border of the forest, where she took refuge under

the upturned roots of a tree that had been blown over by the winds. Again she heard the voices saying, "We are great big bears," and they seemed closer to her than ever. Something familiar about the sound made her call for her children. Immediately there was silence, except for the breaking of dead brambles by Grizzly, who was getting deeper and deeper into the blackberry patch.

Forgetting her pains in her eagerness, Mrs. Sniffer plaintively called again for her lost children. Then she thought she heard an answer. She scrambled from beneath the roots as best she could, and climbed upon the fallen tree. A chipmunk that had been barking and squinting down into a knot hole of the same tree scampered away, chattering with fright.

Mrs. Sniffer whined once more, and a woolly head emerged from a hole that had been dug by a woodchuck down under the log. It was Tumbler, who, when he saw his mother, rolled and tumbled with delight. After him came Boxer, who with his brother, was soon hugged in the fore-legs of their mother. A wolf had frightened them away from the creek where they had gone fishing, and they were still trying to keep up their courage by saying bold things which they thought would frighten all enemies away from the hole in which they had hidden for the night.

## *Mrs. Sniffer and Her Cubs.*

Mrs. Sniffer took her children home to her cave, and cuddled them close to her furry sides that night, for fear they would wander away from her again.

# tripes Attempts to Play 'Possum.

HELLO, Gray Hairs, are you awake, or are you asleep?" called Stripes, the ground squirrel, to the 'possum who had all but his nose covered by the leaves in the hollow base of the tree. "I never can tell whether that fellow is only fooling or is actually asleep. Hello, there, Gray Hairs, I'm sorry I took the task of calling you for supper in the evening. It's small returns I get, doing you this favor for the right to have my side door open out into your den, which is always in a muss, bed covers never arranged, rain coming in at every crack, bats roosting right above you. Wake up, Gray Hairs, and shake the leaves from your fur; I'm getting hoarse from calling you."

Gray Hairs yawned under his cover of leaves as if it were dreadful labor for him to get up. Finally, his sharp, hairless nose ap-

peared, and when he raised up he took with him half his bed covers.

"Gray Hairs, I'm tired calling you," complained Stripes, "I risk my life every evening, sitting here and calling you in such a loud voice that an owl in Moose Bottoms could hear me. You can rent out that side door of yours to some other fellow, because I never have need of it anyhow. I'll return those acorns you gave me, for I've not touched one of them yet. I'll bring them over tomorrow morning and drop them in the corner of your den."

"I'm sorry, Stripes, that you are not satisfied with the bargain," squeaked the 'possum, as if his voice were coming out through the end of his pointed nose, rather than from his mouth. "I don't want you to leave me, and if there is anything that you really want, and I can get it, I shall be grateful to add it to my end of the bargain. I know quite a few things that may be of interest to you, anyone of which I shall be pleased to impart, if you will promise not to desert me. There is one trick especially, that possums never give away, and I shall be pleased to tell it to you. How would you like to learn how to play 'possum?"

"I am not so sure what you are talking about, Gray Hairs," replied Stripes.

"Why, you must surely have heard how almost every 'possum in this forest has fooled that trapper's dog, Cæsar? He caught me,

once, and you see, Stripes, that I am still alive. It was all because of that trick of which I am about to tell you. I have even heard of members of my family getting away from wolves and foxes, who are usually so hungry they can hardly wait, after they once get you, until they have eaten you. With the knowledge of this trick you could fool that owl, Terrible Claws, so that he would sharpen his beak for a week, thinking he would be sure to hold you the next time."

Stripes cuddled himself together like a cat, for he knew it would take the slow 'possum a long time to tell his story. The ground squirrel was willing and glad to add something new to his store of knowledge. "I agree," said he to Gray Hairs, "to awaken you every evening for the rest of this summer if, as you say, this 'possum trick can be proved of value in saving my life at any time." Stripes had seated himself close to the side door that led into the den, so that, if it became necessary, he could readily escape.

"I should like very much to prove to you that this trick is of much value," said the 'possum, "and if you will agree to do as I say, and not run away when the time comes for you to be bold, you will be well repaid. You see, 'possums never expect to escape by running, for their legs are not made for that, and yet they nearly always get away. You know when you are asleep, you forget all about owls, and wolves, and foxes. Well, that is the secret of playing 'possum.

## *Stripes Attempts to Play 'Possum.*

Knowing how nervous you are about all sounds, I shall have to give you lessons, Stripes, and I shall have to begin on the first, right now, if you are willing."

"You may proceed," said the ground squirrel, his eyes shining like little diamonds, down in the darkness of the 'possum den.

"In the first place, Stripes, you must be able to lie perfectly still, no matter if your nose be itching, or be smelling something good for your appetite; whether someone is pulling a few hairs from your coat, or whether an enemy is rubbing his ugly, cold muzzle, along your sides. You must not let them know that you are alive and breathing, because if it is a wolf or dog he will surely bite you harder, until you do lie perfectly quiet. The time Cæsar caught me in the corn patch, he shook me good and hard, and I never let on he was biting me at all. Then he, thinking I was surely dead, walked to the creek to get a drink, when I got up and sneaked off.

"Now you must lie down and be real quiet, just as if you were dead." Gray Hairs tumbled Stripes over on his back. Not being accustomed to this kind of treatment, Stripes flew around upon his feet in an instant and scratched the 'possum across the face with his nails.

"I can never teach you to play 'possum if you are going to act in this manner," complained Gray Hairs. "Why, if you did that

when there was a dog around, he would surely bite you to death."

Stripes, trying to be obedient, now lay down as limply as he could. The 'possum had to straighten him out, for he insisted on curling up, as he did in his den when he was sleeping. Then, too, his eyes would fly open and shut, and his small sides would heave. "You must stop that," cried Gray Hairs, "when there is anyone around you must always have your eyes closed. Suppose Terrible Tooth was standing over you just now. You must also stop twisting your nose around, and quit making those toenails of yours move as if you were running. Now we shall see how still you can lie while I count twenty. If you can be quiet that long, then I shall try you on fifty."

Gray Hairs turned away, and began counting slowly; but before he had said "five," Stripes leaped to his feet, and licked into place several hairs standing up on his back; besides knocking off a bug crawling on his ear.

"This will never do. You must be quiet if you want to learn to do the 'possum act," said Gray Hairs. "Lie down now, and don't stir a leg nor a hair, until I say that you may get up. If you forget yourself like that, when there is a fox hanging over you, he would watch you so carefully, you would never get away alive. Now try it again."

Stripes tumbled over on his side, and did pretty well this time for such an active little fellow as he was. Gray Hairs could even

"Mrs. Whiskers entered with her family of five children."
(Page 145)

pinch him in the side with his teeth, and he would do no more than jerk his hind-feet a little. The 'possum was pleased with his experiments, and said that if Stripes kept on practicing he would become a very clever little 'possum. No one would know any better, because he had stripes on his sides, for all 'possums have patches of white and gray fur. "I am proud of you," said Gray Hairs, "and each day I shall tell you some more about the tricks that we play."

A scratching on the stump, in which the 'possum and the ground squirrel were located, attracted the attention of Gray Hairs, and Stripes, with his usual agility, leaped to his feet.

"Come in," called Gray Hairs.

At the invitation of the owner of the stump, Mrs. Whiskers entered with her family of five children, each of whom was clinging to her back with his tail wrapped around hers, to keep him from falling off when she made an uncertain move. They were a fine lot of children of which any 'possum mother would have been proud, but Stripes did not like the looks of them and he would have retired to his den out along the root had not Gray Hairs called him back, and asked him to show Mrs. Whiskers the trick he had learned and how well he could do it.

The young 'possums let themselves down by their tails from the back of their mother, and began sniffing around the ground squirrel

in a familiar manner. Stripes did not like their cold noses poking around in his fur and he kept away from them as much as he could. Finally Mrs. Whiskers ordered her children to behave themselves. Then they all joined tails and gathered in a heap, in a corner of the hollow stump. Stripes was doing the 'possum act very well indeed, when Sleepy, the largest of Mrs. Whiskers' children, sneaked up to count the stripes on the sleek coat of the ground squirrel. Stripes opened his eyes, and nipped the young investigator with his sharp teeth until he squeaked with pain.

"My, my!" exclaimed Mrs. Whiskers. "How nervous he is!"

Stripes lay down again, resolved to do better because all the young 'possums were laughing at him now. One said he looked just like a little caterpillar rolled up; another noticed what a short fuzzy tail he had, while still another said he saw Stripes peeking. Each of these remarks caused the ground squirrel to jump up and argue. The sound of nuts falling upon the ground, almost made him forget himself, for he leaped clear over Gray Hairs, and was about to jump out of the stump, when he remembered that he was playing 'possum.

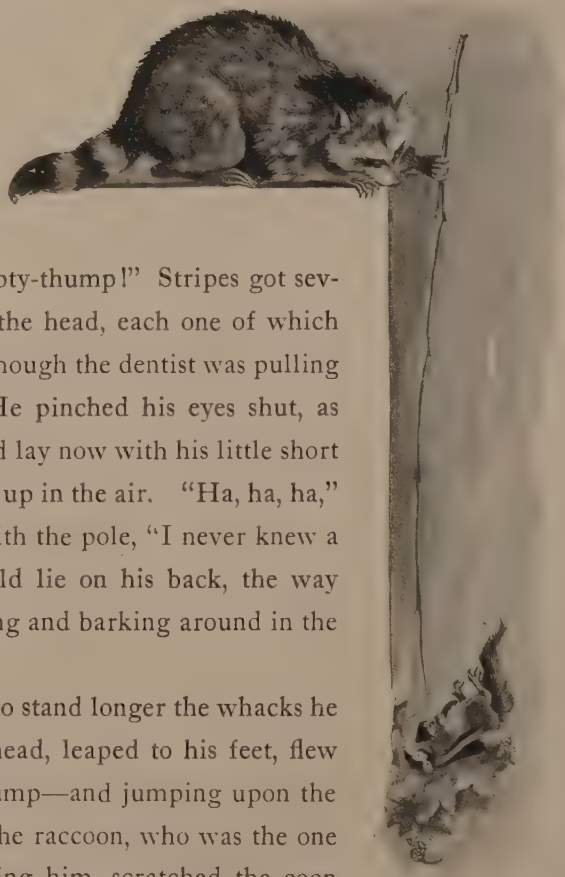
Then Mrs. Whiskers made the smallest of her children step out and show what he could do. The young fellow could be lifted up by the tail, tickled in the ear with a straw, pinched in the heels, and could endure many another annoyance without so much as moving a

hair in objection. Stripes tried it again, but when it came to tickling his ears and feet with a straw, that was too much for his patience and he jumped up and bit every one of the young 'possums. That made Mrs. Whiskers angry and she demanded of Gray Hairs that the ground squirrel be punished for his insolence to visitors. Gray Hairs was arguing the case with her, when in an instant both became quiet, after having the signal to play 'possum. Gray Hairs had taught Stripes, any time he saw him fall over on his side, that Stripes should do likewise. All the young 'possums dropped over at their mother's signal and Stripes did the same, although he did not know what the danger was.

Stripes was just complimenting himself on how successfully he was following the instructions of the old 'possum, and that now he would no longer be compelled to run his legs off, the moment he saw or heard the approach of an enemy, when he felt something strike him on one ear.

A voice said: "That is indeed the funniest manner in which I ever saw a ground-squirrel sleeping. (Stripes gave a little squeak of alarm. Possibly he might have moved his right hind-leg a little. He was not sure that he had not, and he tried to hold it as stiff and quiet as possible.) When I tap him on the ear, with this elder-stem, see him jump. He must have been eating some old and strong

hickory nuts, that have given him bad dreams and made him sleep down there among that lot of drowsy 'possums."



"When I tap him on the ear with this elder stem, see him jump."

"Thump, thumpty-thump!" Stripes got several severe raps on the head, each one of which made him jump, as though the dentist was pulling a tooth for him. He pinched his eyes shut, as tight as he could, and lay now with his little short legs sticking straight up in the air. "Ha, ha, ha," laughed the party with the pole, "I never knew a ground squirrel could lie on his back, the way one sees them jumping and barking around in the forest."

Stripes, unable to stand longer the whacks he was getting on the head, leaped to his feet, flew up the side of the stump—and jumping upon the head of Slim Nose the raccoon, who was the one that had been taunting him, scratched the coon

with his nails, and disappeared in a knot hole, in the hollow root where he had his den.

Stripes was so mortified, because he had failed so foolishly, that he buried himself under the covers of his bed, and never looked outside until the next day. He had decided that playing 'possum was beyond his ability; and so he informed Gray Hairs, whom he agreed to call every evening for two weeks, because of the trouble the 'possum had taken trying to teach him a trick he could not learn.

WHITE HOUSE
TOY DEPARTMENT
S.F.
RAPHAEL WELL & CO.

# JIM CROW TALES

By

BURTON STONER

ILLUSTRATED BY

CARLL B. WILLIAMS

THE SAALFIELD PUBLISHING CO.

NEW YORK AKRON OHIO CHICAGO